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Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

PLANESCAPE® ADVENTURE

DOORS TO THE UNKNOWN



by Bill Slavicsek

TSR

Doors to the Unknown

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AN INTRODUCTION

Doors. They stand there, smug in their frames – hiding, protecting, or confining whatever waits behind them. Closed doors arouse curiosity, manifesting as a sudden urge to throw them open and expose their secrets. Open doors inspire good feelings: a sense of welcome, a forthrightness that can't be denied. Some doors, closed or open, incite darker emotions: anger, jealousy, even fear. Some doors should be ignored, left closed, avoided like ghostlight on a misty eve. The things behind them should remain hidden or confined, at least out of sight. That's the real chant: "Some doorknobs are better left unturned."

That's the case with a certain quartet of doors. These aren't doors in the traditional sense, but they're portals just the same. They exist within bounded spaces – frames, if you will – in different locations throughout Sigil. Yes, Sigil. The Cage. The City of Doors. The Center of Everything and the Last Stop Before Everywhere. That makes these doors special, curious, even terrifying.

What's beyond these doors? What mysteries wait on the other side? Take a look. Open each door and step through. Before proceeding, just remember what happened to Erigan's cat. It got squashed flat beneath the hooves of a drunken bariaur down in the Market Ward, but not before it peeked into an open door and satisfied its curiosity, and not before it looked into the frightening face of the Unknown. . . .

✦ THE TALE OF FOUR DOORS ✦

Garmundi wore the tattered garments of a beggar, his face caked with the dirt of many bathless seasons, long hair tangled like razorvine over his shoulders, and a knotty beard that even a cranium rat wouldn't use as a kip. Still, Garmundi wasn't a simple beggar. This dwarf was a beggar with a higher purpose. He was a street preacher (at least on days when there were berks and Clueless to preach to), using the toppled stones of the Shattered Temple as his pulpit and a mostly emptied jug of fermented portal ooze as his collection plate. Garmundi was ignored by the Athar (who saw his very existence as proof of their beliefs), tolerated by the Harmonium (who had bigger troublemakers to arrest), and served as a baffling diversion to everyone who heard his sermons.

Listen hard, 'cause the dark of it was that Garmundi's chatter was pleasant enough, even powerful in a jumbled, confusing, senseless sort of way. Still, it was clearly the preaching of a barmy who was more than a few wheels short of a wagon. He stood atop tumbled stones along the edges of the Shattered Temple, shouting about doors and portals, dead gods and forgotten religions, the Lady, jink for the unclean light boys, and a dabus in every kip. It was a familiar rattle, cobbled together from a dozen different litanies so that it only made sense to a Xaositect, but Garmundi's voice was strong and musical, so a handful of passersby always stopped to listen. That changed a week ago.

Garmundi's sermons had always included a few scattered references to the faith that once filled the Shattered Temple. Aoskar, a name that few dare speak in the Cage, always slipped from Garmundi's mouth at least once or

twice before any sermon ended. A week ago, the dwarf street preacher suddenly lost his confused words and barmy undertones. In short, he started to make sense. Now the Athar have taken notice, the Harmonium have grown less tolerant, and the handfuls have become genuine crowds. Even dabus come to the temple, but they make a specific pretense of being involved in something else while they listen.

On a typical day in the Lower Ward, the air thick with smoke and cinders, Garmundi's voice sings from the temple ruins, drawing listeners like thieves to free jink. On such a day, a cutter can hear Garmundi's words clearly. . . .

"The time of the Four Doors is at hand!" the filthy dwarf shouts from his perch atop a crumbled pillar. "These doors that are gone are always here, present but rarely accessible – the doors to the unknown places."

Listen to Garmundi's chant, but keep an eye on the crowd. Over there, a group of displeased Athar scowl and conspire in dangerous whispers. Near the edge of the crowd, Harmonium bashers stare angrily at the dwarf preacher as their anxious fingers curl around waiting weapons. The listeners hang on every word that rumbles from Garmundi's mouth. This collection of sods, including the few dabus roaming around the perimeter, appears to be captivated – not a common occurrence for Sigil's jaded populace.

On a signal from the Athar cutters, the Harmonium bashers move, parting the crowd with crisp orders, strong arms, and the occasional swing of a club. Garmundi leaps to another jagged pillar, this one jutting over a deep crack in the temple's foundation. "The Four Doors return!" the dwarf shouts as a raging whirlwind spins into existence in the hole. He leaps, falling toward the sharp stones far below. The crowd gasps, and the Harmonium reaches the crack's precarious edge.

SOME DOORKNOBS ARE BETTER LEFT UNTURNED.

— OLD PETITIONER CHANT

"What addle-coved nonsense is this?" one basher grumbles as he peers into the hole. "He gave us the laugh," another says angrily, turning to look into the crowd.

"Find him!" the lead Hardhead shouts. "That dwarf has broken the laws of Sigil and the Lady!"

✦ BACKGROUND ✦

In Sigil, the City of Doors, there're a wide variety of portals to other places. Some look and function like normal doors until the proper gate keys pass through them. Others resemble gates and portals in only the most basic respects. To an experienced planewalker, there's nothing new about these types of portals, or the way they function. They're the usual doors for getting from one end of the multiverse to the other. A blood needs to tumble to the dark of what're called blinks, or intermittent portals. Like shifting portals, blinks appear and disappear seemingly at random. They can only be accessed at certain points in the blink cycles, which usually have short periods of activity followed by long periods of inactivity. Most blinks have discernible patterns, if a cutter has the patience and understanding to figure them out. The Four Doors that Garmundi was rattling his bone-box about are blinks of a most unusual and dangerous nature. That's what makes them so important.

First, these blinks only appear once every 500 years. They always appear in the same four locations, becoming active at the same time and remaining that way for about two months. Then they disappear, leaving nothing behind but four unusable bounded spaces for another half a millennium.

Second, these blinks don't resemble regular doors. Each is a strange portal that looks dangerous and can be deadly to any berk who blindly leaps into it without the proper key. Those who know the secrets of these keys are few and far between. They guard these secrets jealously, not giving 'em away for just a smile or a handful of jink.

Third, each blink opens to a place off the beaten path. These corners of the multiverse aren't just unknown, they're impossible to reach through any other means. Even the Clueless should tumble to the fact that these doors aren't meant to be opened, let alone used, by the average basher.

Why are these blinks so unusual? What unrevealed ties bind them together? For the dark of it, a body needs to peer into the distant past, to visit that unremembered moment ages ago when the Temple of Doors became the Shattered Temple and the power Aoskar was banished to the Astral Plane. . . .

WHEN THE FOUR DOORS FIRST BLINKED

Though the details have faded with the passage of time (or have been purposely forgotten so as to not incur the Lady's wrath), the basics of the tale remain. In the distant past, the Lady of Pain became displeased with Aoskar, the Power of Portals, also known as the Keeper of Gateways and the God of Doors. On that day, worship of Aoskar was forbidden, his temple shattered, and his image eradicated from the Cage. It was also on that day (or so the chant goes) that four doors in different parts of Sigil vanished. The bounded spaces remained, but nothing anyone did could make these portals open again.

Five hundred years went by – enough time for the doors and their strange disappearances to have been forgotten by all but the most long-lived beings. Aoskar's religion was gone as well, and it seemed nothing was left to remind anyone that it had ever existed at all.

And then the doors returned.

Each one reappeared suddenly, popping back into existence across the city right in the places where they used to be: the Clerk's Ward, the Lower Ward, the Market Ward, and The Lady's Ward. A few brave sods, recognizing these as portals – and probably very special portals at that – attempted to learn how to access them. The first few learned that these weren't portals a body blindly stepped into, as their next of kin can sadly testify.

The next few used trial and error to try to discover the proper gate keys. (For some reason, the *warp sense* spell doesn't work on these particular portals.) A dwarf named Fargullen tumbled to the dark of the portal in the Lower Ward (or at least that's what his companions reported) and stepped through it. There was no bloody corpse left behind, so his companions decided he had passed through the door to someplace else. Before they could follow, the doors disappeared again (as two months had elapsed). The Harmonium then arrested the companions before they could tell anyone else about the key to the Lower Ward portal.

The talk of these four doors (now called blinks due to their unusual nature) spread like razorvine through the taverns and faction halls of the city. Every sage and would-be portal logger developed a theory, and keys to the blinks were sold on every street corner for a handsome amount of jink. (None of these keys were genuine, but that's never stopped an ambitious entrepreneur from making a sale.) When many weeks went by without the blinks returning, talk turned to other matters and the more pressing problems of the day. The mysterious doors were again forgotten.

EVERY 500 YEARS

Like clockwork, the Four Doors reappear every 500 years. They return on the same day, remain in place for exactly two months, then blink out of existence for another 500 years. A few knowledgeable and courageous bloods figured out the keys necessary to safely use these mysterious portals, but most berks simply left the doors alone until they vanished again.

Some important incidents have been connected to these portals since Aoskar was toppled and the doors first blinked. The first incident occurred the second time the doors returned: Fargullen the dwarf emerged from the Lower Ward portal to spread prophecies about some future age. He was fed to the Wyrm for his troubles, but not before a significant portion of the population heard his ominous words. They were much the same words as those spoken by Garmundi. However, there were a few more specific phrases, a few more overt references to Aoskar, and a few more dire predictions about the Lady. She wasn't very forgiving.

Another time, the ominous Fourth Door – a portal that no one had ever figured out how to open – swung wide and let a terrible threat loose in the Cage. That threat was Lathuraz, a being known as a mercurial, a powerful entity from a higher reality. Lathuraz sought to conquer the multiverse, and for 500 years he roamed the planes and primes, using the doors of Sigil as a means of travel. When the blinks returned, many of Sigil's most influential citizens joined forces to subdue the mercurial. Then, they locked him away behind one of the other blinks. Naturally, he has sworn revenge. (See "The Dark of Lathuraz" below.)

THE DARK OF THE DOORS

No one knows exactly why these particular portals are tied together or why they operate on the cycle they do. Some believe it was Aoskar's dying act. Others think the blinks are the Lady's doing, but no one has ever gotten up the courage to ask her. A few claim that there's no grand plan to the doors; they're simply the result of some strange accident, with no more meaning than a bolt of lightning out of a clear sky. The answer could be one of these, some combination of them, or something entirely different.

The First Door can be found in the Clerk's Ward. It always appears inside a room on the second floor of a building on Gray Dragon Lane. The room itself serves as the bounded space, and the building – or one like it – has stood on the spot since before the Lady and the Keeper of Gateways had it out. During the months of activity, the floor of the room constantly vibrates. If the proper key is carried into the room, a cyclone of rushing wind opens the portal and carries all occupants to a hidden corner of Acheron, in the layer of Thuldanin where things of yesterday and tomorrow lay in scattered, mile-high heaps.

The Second Door waits in the Lower Ward, inside the Shattered Temple. To access this door a berk has to leap into a crack in the temple's foundation, risking death from not only the fall but the razor-sharp rocks that jut from the impossibly deep bottom. Of course, if that same berk has the proper key, a whirlwind of sparkling fire whisks him to another plane. The Second Door leads to Pandemonium, where it deposits travelers in a sealed vault in a layer of Agathion.

The Third Door is bound to a living creature that visits the Market Ward once every 500 years. The cortelestial is a huge, proud beast with a large, armored body and a larger, armored head. Tiny eyes glow from inside deep pits in the head armor, peering out above a wide, tooth-filled maw. The creature never speaks or shows intelligence of any kind, but if anyone stands and looks into its eyes, the cortelestial reacts by dropping its lower jaw to the ground. The portal is thus formed by the bounded space of the creature's mouth – a mouth filled with daggerlike teeth, a dry tongue, and breath as foul as any garbage heap in the Hive. Without the proper key, berks stepping into the cortelestial wind up as lunch for the hungry creature. Those with the right key step through to the prime world Logicus, a place unlike anywhere most seasoned planewalkers have ever visited.

The Fourth Door can be found in The Lady's Ward. Unlike the other three, it looks like a regular door. It appears in an otherwise blank wall, on an otherwise nondescript tower at the end of Lady's Row. The tower has no windows, no doors, not even a name. It's simply "the tower," a barren monolith of gray stone that serves no obvious purpose. However, for two months every 500 years, a door appears in the tower wall. This normal-sized door is made of heavy wood carved with intricate runes which no one can read. The door has no handle, knob, or keyhole. It doesn't even have a knocker or any visible hinges. In all the time since the Four Doors first blinked, this portal has only opened once (at least that has been recorded), when Lathuraz the mercurial stepped through. If a cutter could find the key that opens this door, he'd be able to step into a place where reality works on a level higher than the one most cutters are used to. It's a place where colors are brighter, sounds louder, tastes more vibrant, and everything works better than it should.

Many mysteries are wrapped up in the Four Doors. Some can be solved by stepping through just one or two of these portals. Others require trips through all four. Even then, much must be left to the visitor's own interpretation, for not everything in the multiverse is clear or easily explained.

THE TIES THAT BIND

Many of the secrets of the Four Doors have interpretations that are left to the DM and future products. The ties that concern the parameters of this product are outlined below.

The main connection involves Estavan, one of the merchant lords of the Planar Trade Consortium. Estavan, who appears to be an ogre mage but is in fact much more than his appearance would indicate, has been studying the Four Doors for untold centuries. One chant describes Estavan as one of the key players in the capture and imprisonment of Lathuraz the mercurial, but the dark is that he probably inherited his guardianship of the Third Door at some significantly later time.

In any event, Estavan has been keeping a ledger that records the blink cycles of the Four Doors and lists the various attempts to discover the keys to using them. During this latest blink cycle, Estavan has decided to deal with the mercurial in a more permanent fashion. To accomplish this, he needs a group of adventurers to enter the Third Door to free Lathuraz. Then these same adventurers must follow Lathuraz through the Fourth Door to his home reality – for only the mercurial has ever successfully opened the Fourth Door (as far as anyone knows). Only in the higher reality can the mercurial be utterly destroyed.

Some berks might prefer to just let the mercurial go through the Fourth Door and then seal it up. No more mercurial problem, right? Wrong! In the centuries since Lathuraz was imprisoned, many bloods of great power have tried to seal or destroy the intermittent portals. No matter what these bloods do, the portals reappear in perfect shape when the next cycle begins. Therefore, Estavan has found it necessary to come up with a different solution.

At the same time, some others have interest in the Four Doors. These include Balthazar Thames, a solver of mysteries and a finder of lost objects who has been hired to discover the key to the Fourth Door; Lissandra the Gate-Seeker, who studies portals as her livelihood; the thugs of Jerkot's Imports, a cover operation for a band of planar thieves who covet the treasures rumored to lie beyond the Four Doors; Fell, a defrocked dabus who knows more about the doors than he's willing to tell; a gang of fanatics called the Society of the Locked Door who are dedicated to closing all portals forever; and a group of Signers set on reviving the dead god Aoskar as part of a project to demonstrate their superior power to the other factions. Each of these players has a stake in the Four Doors, and each becomes involved in some manner before the two months end and the current blink cycle runs its course.

See the section describing the "Key Figures in These Adventures," as well as each adventure for more details on how these groups figure into the overall plot.


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THE DARK OF LATHURAZ

Lathuraz, the mercurial, comes from a corner of a plane where a different level of reality holds sway. Instead of the reality known by the Clueless of every prime world and most planewalkers, Lathuraz comes from a place where everything is more intense – colors vibrate with unbridled passion, whispers rumble like thunder, and even the most gentle touch echoes with unrestrained power.

Unlike the other mercurials, Lathuraz wasn't content to simply worship and bask in the glory of his god. He was curious, and he had a desire to prove he was better and stronger than his fellow mercurials. Indeed, if Lathuraz's dreams would have become common knowledge, the other mercurials would have deemed him mad. Only Zarulaz, Lathuraz's brother, knew of Lathuraz's desires, but Zarulaz ignored them out of love for his brother.

Eventually, Lathuraz discovered the intermittent portal that connected his realm to Sigil. He figured out the key to the door and stepped through. Faithful Zarulaz, naturally, followed. In Sigil, the brothers found a world where they were more real than the native inhabitants. To Lathuraz, the Cagers were simply shadows – dull, faded images of a lesser reality than his own. He believed himself to be as far above them as his own god was above him. With that realization, Lathuraz decided to become the god of this world – to conquer it and use its shadows as his playthings.

Zarulaz didn't see the Cagers this way, but he had no dreams of conquest either. He tried to stop his brother's mad plans, but eventually Lathuraz left Zarulaz behind. All Zarulaz could do was remain in Sigil, listen to the terrible tales that travelers brought from other planes, and wait for Lathuraz to return.

For 500 years, Lathuraz continued his reign of terror. He used Sigil as his base of operations, but satisfied his hungers mostly beyond the doors of the Cage. Whenever he returned, he made sure to avoid Zarulaz. This was easier than it might seem, for mercurials have the ability to shed their own skin and "borrow" the flesh of others. (See the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® entry at the end of this book for more details.)

Not everyone was willing to let Lathuraz go on unchecked, however. A group of concerned and powerful bloods hooked up with Zarulaz and worked out a plan to capture Lathuraz. Zarulaz wanted to take Lathuraz back to their own reality, but he realized his brother wouldn't willingly follow him. He had the bloods gather the items necessary to find Lathuraz, trap him in one form, and render him helpless. The plan was set for when the next blink cycle commenced. Without the replenishing touch of their higher reality, they were moving closer to the shadows that Lathuraz so despised.

Both mercurials had grown weaker in the five centuries since they stepped through the Fourth Door. While Zarulaz had developed a plan to deal with Lathuraz, Lathuraz was also ready for his brother. Though the mercurials were immune to the effects of weapons forged in the lower reality, Lathuraz had found a weapon in his travels that could hurt Zarulaz. He used it on his brother, but the bloods working with Zarulaz still finished their task of rendering Lathuraz helpless.

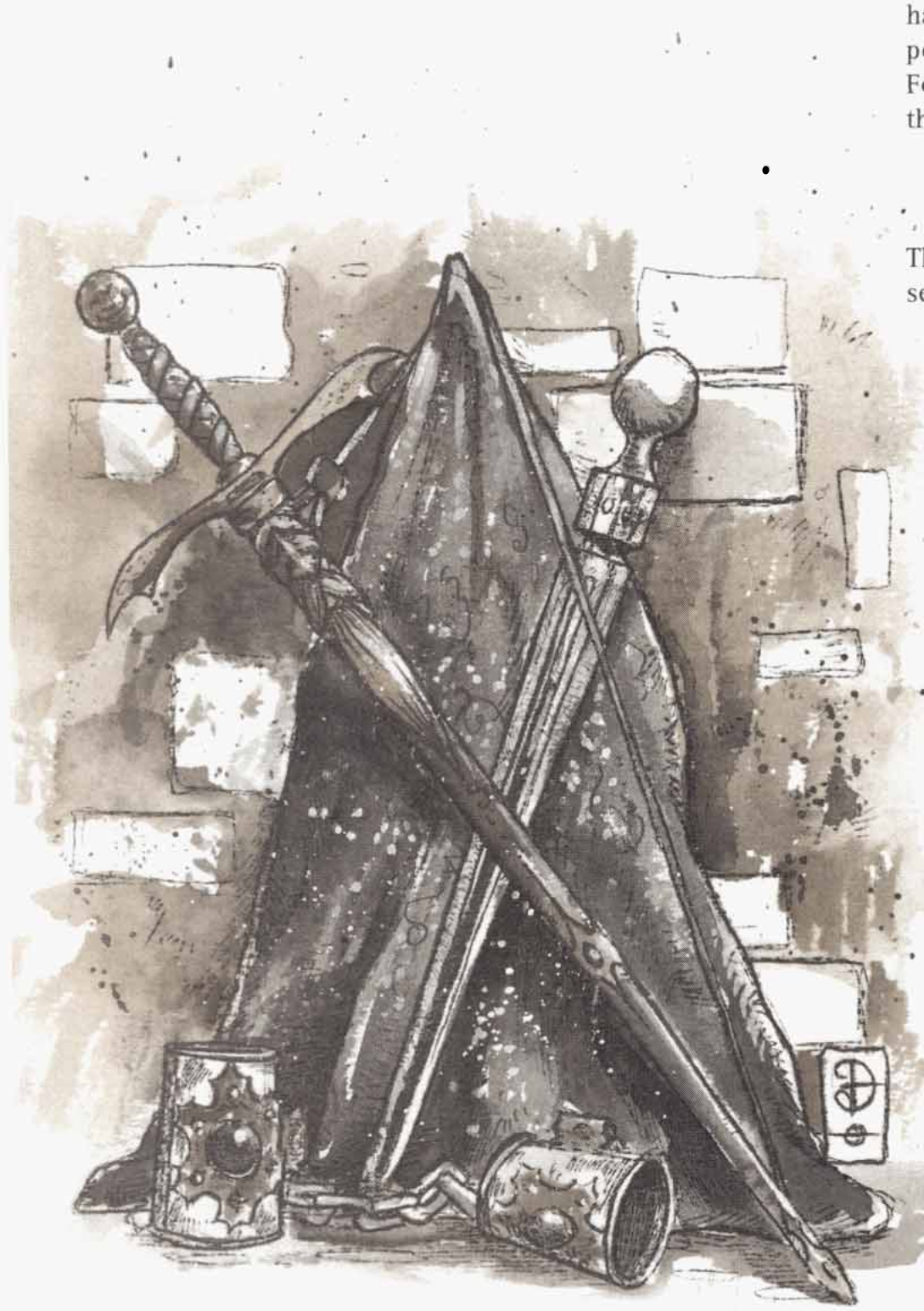
Without Zarulaz to open the Fourth Door, the bloods changed their plan. They hid Zarulaz's items and Lathuraz's sword behind the other three portals and imprisoned Lathuraz beyond the Third Door.

Now Lathuraz remains imprisoned, plotting his revenge on the bloods who defeated him and all of this reality. Zarulaz, meanwhile, badly wounded but not dead (for the only way to kill a mercurial is to destroy his true flesh – flesh still waiting beyond the Fourth Door), resides with one of the discarded items on the other side of an intermittent door.

ZARULAZ'S ITEMS

The heroes may not know this from the beginning, but they're going to want to gather Zarulaz's items to use against Lathuraz in the fourth adventure. These items are listed below, along with the door behind which each is hidden. For details about any of these items, see the adventure where that item is hidden. (For example, details on the *rod of mercury* are found in "The First Door.")

- *Rod of mercury*: hidden behind the First Door, locates mercurials.
- *Cloak of trapping*: hidden behind the Second Door, binds mercurials.
- *Sword of Lathuraz*: hidden behind the Third Door, damages mercurials.
- *Manacles of lesser reality*: hidden behind the Third Door, renders mercurials helpless.



SUMMARY OF THE ADVENTURES

The heroes first learn of the Four Doors when they hear Garmundi speak at the Shattered Temple. Thereafter, they can seek out more information of their own accord or be prodded into action by a series of seemingly random incidents that push them toward the Four Doors. Note that these four adventures work best when they are interspersed among a current campaign plot. The first one or two adventures herein can be used as a change of pace from a DM's current storyline. By the third adventure, the mystery of the Four Doors might become the driving force in the campaign for a time – at least until the two months end and the doors blink out of existence again.

It's suggested that the adventures be played in the order presented. Of course, if the heroes decide to pursue the doors in a different order, they should be allowed to. The DM may have to adjust certain encounters to better fit the heroes' experience levels, however. The only strict rule is that the Fourth Door can't be opened until the heroes have overcome the mysteries of the other three doors.

THE PROLOGUE ENCOUNTER

The first encounter in the mystery of the Four Doors is presented in the Prologue. It involves the events depicted in "The Tale of the Four Doors" wherein the heroes listen to Garmundi the street preacher and then get caught up in the chaos that ensues. They may have to battle a Harmonium basher or two before the scene plays out or sidestep the stampeding crowd in some manner. By the end of this encounter, the heroes have heard about the Four Doors, witnessed the disappearance of Garmundi, learned of the Athar's desire to find the dwarf, and received a strange calling card inviting them to a loft in the Clerk's Ward. Any of these incidents can lead them to one of the first two adventures.

ADVENTURE 1: THE FIRST DOOR

The heroes respond to the invitation on the calling card. They have been offered employment by Balthazar Thames, a self-proclaimed "solver of mysteries" with an office on Gray Dragon Lane in the Clerk's Ward. In reality, the invitation comes from Estavan the merchant lord, who needs the heroes to recover his ledger (it was "borrowed" from his office while he was conducting business outside Sigil).

Through a complicated series of blinds and hidden plots, Estavan secretly set Thames up in an office that would one day be visited by the blink known as the First Door. It was Estavan's hope that by the time the blink cycle started again, Thames would be of sufficient confidence and

expertise to perform the dangerous work Estavan had in mind. Of course, Thames knew nothing of Estavan's involvement, as the merchant lord prefers to work from behind the scenes.

Things were progressing nicely when trouble struck. Thames had been hired by a Signer named Origax to solve the mystery of the Fourth Door. Origax provided Thames with Estavan's ledger (which his associates procured through expert thievery), and the mystery-solver went about doing what he does best. He had just finished consulting with Lissandra, a prime wizard who studies the portals of Sigil, when he was attacked by Jerkot's thugs. They left Thames dying in an alley, stole the ledger, and headed toward his office to look for more clues concerning the portals. The thugs reached the office just in time for the latest blink cycle to begin. As the proper gate key is a seal on the ledger's cover, their arrival opened the First Door.

The heroes may learn as much of this as they can by studying the clues provided, but eventually they'll enter the office as well – carrying the calling card with the special seal duplicated on its face. The door will then open, depositing them in an isolated junkyard in a hidden corner of Thuldanin (on Acheron). In the junkyard, they must battle the thugs (who are busy looting the place for wares to sell in Sigil) to retrieve the ledger before returning to the Cage.

ADVENTURE II: THE SECOND DOOR

The second adventure involves the heroes in an attempt to locate Garmundi the street preacher. The heroes could be hired by the Athar, who want the dwarf brought back to Sigil to face punishment for breaking the Lady's laws, or the Signers (led by Origax) might hire them to find the dwarf so that they can use him in their plan to revive Aoskar. Either way, about a week or so after the dwarf's disappearance, the heroes leap into a deep hole and wind up landing on Pandemonium, in the layer called Agathion.

In Agathion, the portal opens into a sealed cavity somewhere in the endless rock. Garmundi arrived a short time ago, but he was immediately set upon by one of the two primary inhabitants of this cavity: a retriever trapped 1,000 years ago that's trying to complete the mission given it by an unnamed Abyssal Lord. The other inhabitant is Zarulaz, still weak from the wounds inflicted on him by Lathuraz.

The heroes must free Garmundi from the retriever's clutches. If they want the item hidden here, they have to wrest it from the monster, as that was the goal of its mission.

ADVENTURE III: THE THIRD DOOR

Estavan once again approaches the heroes with an offer of employment. This time he wants them to accompany one of his agents through the Third Door. Of course, the heroes need to figure out the key to the door – that's part of the job. "Seek out Fell, the fallen dabus, or Lissandra for help in that matter," the merchant lord advises. Both can provide a portion of the key, but not before the heroes must defend the portal sages from fanatics who want to kill them.

Eventually, the heroes and Estavan's agent step into a prime world where magic doesn't exist and technology is the primary power. Wizards and clerics won't be of much use here, at least not in their traditional roles, but they'll find other ways to provide help to the party. While the heroes deal with the strange inhabitants of this prime world, Estavan's agent goes about his shadowy business. He's here to free Lathuraz from his ancient prison. The heroes need to decide whether to help or hinder the agent, at least until they discover that the mercurial is already free!

ADVENTURE IV: THE FOURTH DOOR

The heroes follow Lathuraz back to Sigil, where they lose sight of him. Using his special powers (see the notes that follow), the mercurial takes control of the leader of the fanatical Society of the Locked Door. He convinces the fanatics to protect him while he opens the Fourth Door. "Beyond the door is the power we need to shut the portals forever," the disguised mercurial explains. The heroes must battle through the fanatics to reach the portal at the moment the mercurial opens it. After that, the heroes and the mercurial enter a place of hyper-reality – a place that holds the mercurial's power as well as the means to his ultimate destruction.



✦ PREPARING FOR PLAY ✦

The Dungeon Master (DM) needs to have copies of the AD&D® rules books *(Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master® Guide)* and the Planescape® *Campaign Setting* boxed set to properly run *Doors to the Unknown.* Copies of the *Planescape Monstrous Compendium Appendices I and II* and *Uncaged: Faces of Sigil* are also useful, but they are not necessary to play these adventures.

Doors to the Unknown is a series of four short adventures designed for parties of four to six player characters of progressively higher levels, starting with heroes of 2nd to 4th level and ending with heroes of 7th to 10th level. Though the adventures can be played in any order, they are presented in a sequence that makes sense as a mini-campaign and accounts for characters advancing in levels. The heroes shouldn't be new to Sigil or the planes, though. These adventures work best when incorporated into an existing Planescape campaign.

Remember, a PLANESCAPE adventure is more about ideas than monster-bashing. The DM is encouraged to use story goals and award experience based on completing these goals (see the *DMG*, Chapter Eight). The conclusion of each adventure addresses story-based awards.

Italicized text printed in amber is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased to the players. Instructions for the DM are set off with diamonds (✦). Special DM NOTES are scattered throughout each adventure to reveal important information and pass on role-playing advice. DMs will also find sections labeled THE REAL CHANT and SLIPPING THE BLINDS that respectively clarify plot points and give directions for dealing with possible problems.

While faction membership will have effects on the way the PCs approach each adventure, the plots don't hinge on which factions the PCs belong to. Instead, faction ties and philosophies work to enhance each plot's role-playing possibilities, depending on the needs of the DM.

It's suggested that these adventures be interwoven into whatever storyline currently occupies a DM's campaign. For example, while engaged in a DM's current plot, the heroes witness the scene described in "The Prologue." They participate in one of the four adventures, go back to the DM's plot, get drawn into another of these adventures, and so on. However, remember that the doors will be accessible for only two months. Consider these adventures to be incidental encounters and side-tracks until the heroes figure out that there's more involved than they first suspected.

KEY FIGURES ✦ IN THESE ADVENTURES ✦

Quite a few parties are interested in the Four Doors. Some play major roles in the adventures, others appear only once or twice. Even so, each has an important part to play as the mysteries of the Four Doors unravel. These key figures are described below, including their backgrounds, game statistics, and interest in the Four Doors.



NEVER SIGN ANYTHING ESTAVAN'S WRITTEN, TOUCHED, OR SO MUCH AS LOOKED AT.

— DRECUR THE GROCER



ESTAVAN THE MERCHANT LORD

(Pl/♂ ogre mage/HD 5+2/Fraternity of Order/LE)

AC 4; MV 9, Fl 15 (B); hp 34; THAC0 15 (10 with naginata); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+8 (magical naginata, Str) or 1d2 (whip); SA Strength bonus (+3 to attack, +6 to damage); SZ L (10½' tall); ML elite (14); Int exceptional (16); XP 2,000.

FACTION NOTES: As a Guvner, Estavan may not knowingly break a law; he can use *comprehend languages* once per day.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Whip, *naginata +2*, *necklace of adaptation*.

SPELL-LIKE ABILITIES: (At will) *darkness 10' radius*, *fly* (for 12 turns), *invisibility*, *polymorph self* (humanoid form, 4'–12' tall), *regenerate* (1 hp/round); (Once per day) *charm person*, *cone of cold* (60' long, 8d8 damage), *gaseous form*, *sleep*.

Estavan is one of the merchant lords of the Planar Trade Consortium. Rumors abound that he's been involved in the business of Sigil for a lot longer than his apparent years. He looks to be an ogre mage with impressive though limited powers, but appearances can be deceiving. He's as good as his word, but he does everything he can to make sure that the wording serves him best.

Estavan can be ostentatious, manipulative, and merciless if it suits him, but he can also be a powerful friend and ally if a body stays on his good side. He keeps an office in the Clerk's Ward, though from the outside it doesn't appear to be a place where an ogre mage could comfortably work. The stairs up to the second-floor office are narrow, and the door at the top of the stairs is built for beings much smaller than ogre mages. Inside the office, though, everything (except for a pair of human-sized chairs) is built on a grand scale – a 15-foot ceiling, a huge desk, an oversized couch, a door on the far wall that reaches to the high ceiling.

Though never seen walking the streets of the Cage, Estavan has his well-manicured hands in every conceivable pie. His interests in this series of adventures concerns Lathuraz, whom Estavan has for some reason taken responsibility for. A few sods who know bits and pieces of the story say that Estavan was among those Sigil high-ups who put down the mercurial all those centuries ago, but bloods in the know realize that ogre mages don't live that long (at least not normal ogre mages).

Among the many ledgers Estavan keeps to record business transactions and caravan routes are a series of logs marking portals, their destinations, and the keys necessary to use them. Some of the ledgers track unusual portals, including the blinks known as the Four Doors. One ancient ledger has a scintillating cover made from the hide of some planar beast with a strange symbol branded into the lower right corner. This ledger is concerned with the blink referred to as the First Door. Strangely, the handwriting in this

ledger, from the earliest entries to the most recent notations, looks exactly the same. The entries record the location of the First Door, details of the door's blink cycles for the last 3,000 years, and the means necessary to access this mysterious portal. Of course, a lot of it is written in code, so the average berk on the street can't make much use of it.

Estavan has been waiting for this latest blink cycle for a long time. He wants to end the threat of the mercurial during this cycle. His study of the ancient documents have led him to believe that the mercurial can only be destroyed through one method. Unfortunately, that method involves going to the place where the mercurial came from. It means crossing through the Fourth Door. As the mercurial is the only being known to have ever accessed the Fourth Door, Estavan's plan takes on a hint of danger. He needs to find capable cutters to enter the Third Door, free Lathuraz, then follow him back through the Fourth Door to deal with him in a permanent manner. 'Course, he'll never come right out and say what he wants or needs. It's much more in Estavan's nature to pay for a lesser service and get the real work done through the necessity of the situation.

The entire process is risky and potentially disastrous, but it's also got the potential for a big payoff. No merchant lord worth his weight in platinum ever got rich taking the safe and easy path.

For more information about Estavan, see *Uncaged: Faces of Sigil.*

BALTHAZAR THAMES

(Pl/♂ aasimar/F7,B8/Free League/NG)
Str 17, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 13

AC 3; MV 12; hp 36; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2;
Dmg 1d10+2 (*two-handed sword +1*, Str);
SA Strength bonus (+1 to attack and damage);
SZ M (6' tall); ML elite (13).

Special Equipment: *Two-handed sword +1, chain mail +2*, spellbook.

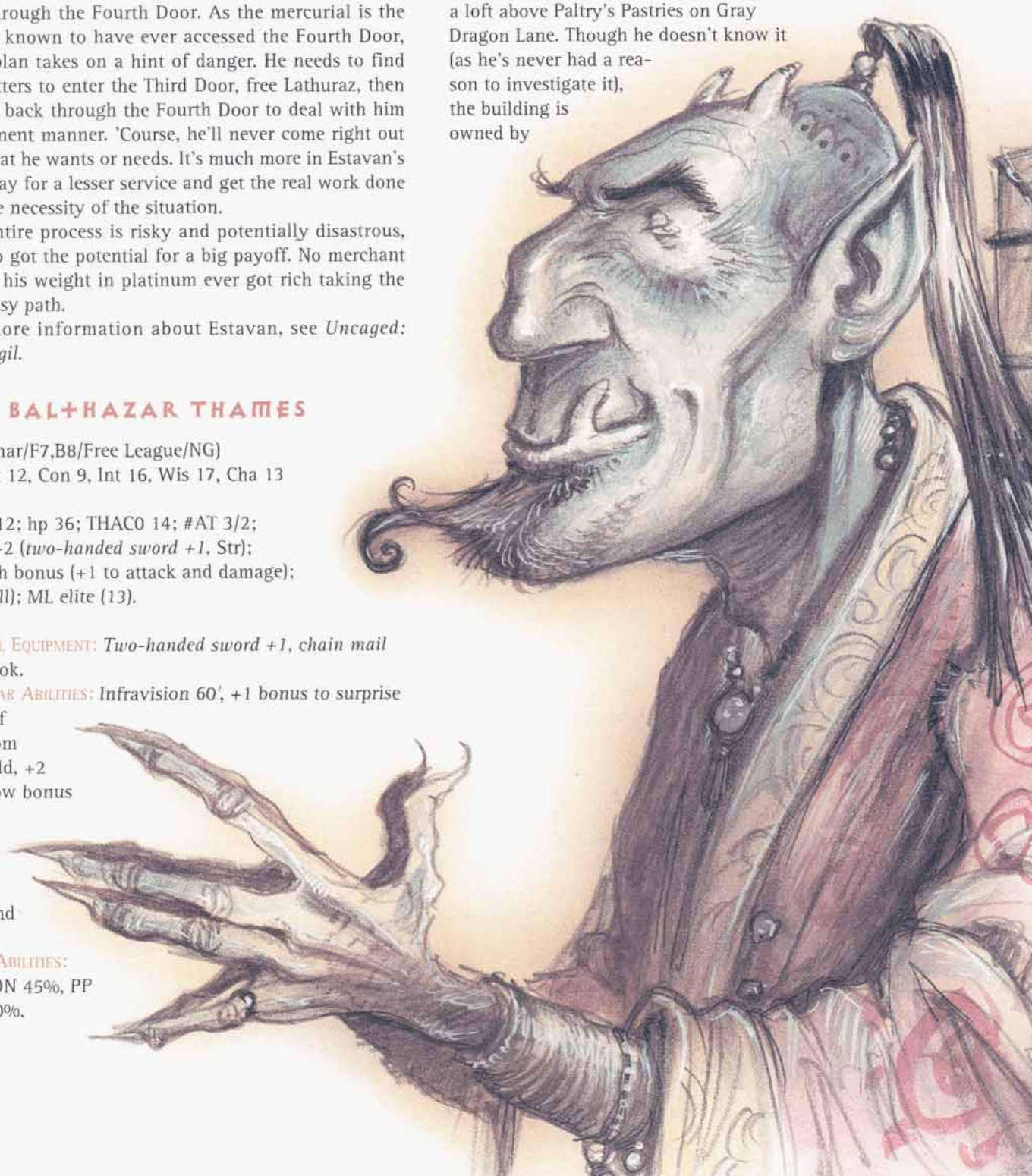
Aasimar Abilities: *Infravision 60', +1 bonus to surprise* checks, half damage from fire and cold, +2 saving throw bonus against *charm, domination, emotion*, and *fear.*

Bard Abilities: CW 65%, DN 45%, PP 40%, RL 60%.

Spells: (3/3/1) 1st – *change self, comprehend languages, read magic*; 2nd – *detect invisibility, knock, levitate*, 3rd – *suggestion.*

Balthazar Thames considers himself a solver of mysteries, a finder of lost objects and persons, and a friend for hire. He sells his services to all but the most obviously evil personages, though he prefers to help those truly in need and those of good alignment. As an aasimar, Thames displays the best qualities of this plane-touched race. He's honest, courageous, and believes in the causes he champions.

Thames has an office in the Clerk's Ward. It's located in a loft above Paltry's Pastries on Gray Dragon Lane. Though he doesn't know it (as he's never had a reason to investigate it), the building is owned by



the Planar Trade Consortium. Indeed, when Thames first started making a name for himself in Sigil, the secret benefactor who fronted him the jink to set up shop in a better ward was none other than Estavan. The merchant lord has used Thames's services (anonymously, of course) whenever he's needed them, always with an eye toward preparing the aasimar for the day when the Four Doors appeared again.

Unfortunately, Estavan hasn't been able to acquire Thames for the current blink cycle. While Estavan was away on business, a group of Signers broke into his office and stole the ledger concerning the First Door. Origax, a venerable wizard representing the Signers, gave the ledger to Thames and hired him to break its code. Thames conducted his research in places like the Guvner's Library, various magical shops, and even consulted with a few associates he has developed over the years. (Despite all of his research, he was still not aware that his office actually contained the very blink he was looking for.) He had just finished meeting with Lissandra when things suddenly went very wrong.

On his way back to Gray Dragon Lane, Thames was attacked by bashers in the employ of Jerkot's Imports. They left Thames badly wounded and scurried off with the ledger. As a result, Thames must spend much of the adventures recovering from his grievous wounds at The Healing Hovel on Thistlewind Way. He can answer some questions and provide a clue or two for the heroes, but he won't be able to jump out of bed and fight alongside them (unless the DM thinks they really need the help). He's basically a source of information to be called upon as necessary.

LISSANDRA THE GATE-SEEKER

(Pr/♀ human/M9/Revolutionary League/NG)
Str 12, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 14

AC 0 (bracers, ring); MV 12; hp 26; THAC0 18 (15 with staff); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 (*staff of striking +3);* SD +2 reaction adjustment due to Charisma, *ring of protection +2*; SZ M (6′ tall); ML champion (16); XP 5,000.

FACTION NOTES: As a member of the Revolutionary League, Lissandra must donate 90% of her wealth to her faction or the oppressed. She can also pose as a member of any faction and learn rogue proficiencies at normal cost.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Portal log book (protected with *lightning bolt* activated by touch, inflicting 9d6 points of damage, save vs. spell for half), *bracers of defense AC 2, ring of protection +2, staff of striking +3* (21 charges; 1d6+6 per strike for 2 charges, 1d6+9 per strike for 3 charges).

SPELLS: (4/3/3/2/1) 1st – *charm person, comprehend languages, detect magic, magic missile*; 2nd – *ESP, warp sense* (×2); 3rd – *fly, lightning bolt, suggestion*; 4th – *dimension door, wizard eye*; 5th – *teleport.*

Lissandra is a rare breed in the Cage. She's a clueless prime who has adapted to the ways of Sigil to such an extent that most Cagers now refer to her as a cutter if not a blood. She came to Sigil to learn about portals, and now this research has become her primary focus (some call it her obsession). She sells the dark of the city's portals – at least the ones she knows – giving location, destination, and gate key needed to whoever meets her price. At the same time, she searches for other portals and waits patiently to interview whoever (or whatever) might step through.

Lissandra is a wizard. She's a tall, natural beauty with thick blond hair and strong features. She's straightforward and serious about the work she does, with the utmost patience and a methodical pace that leaves little room for mistakes. Though she asks numerous questions of those who use portals, she never threatens or pushes for answers. She asks nicely and sometimes even pays for the information she seeks.

During her studies, Lissandra came across the legend of the blinks and the story of the Four Doors. Naturally, anything connected to the doors interests her greatly. She helped Balthazar Thames in his attempt to understand the ancient scrawls in a ledger, and between them, they discerned that the book is more than just a record of the First Door. It is a gate key for the door as well. She agreed to aid Thames as he saw fit, asking only that she be allowed to keep her own record of the blink and its destination.

As with Thames, Lissandra is a good resource for the heroes to make use of. She can provide information, advice, and maybe even a gate key if all other avenues lead to dead ends. She never leaves Sigil anymore, so she won't agree to travel with the heroes, but she'll give them whatever other kinds of help they might require – as long as she gets a fair wage in return. Jink is nice, but Lissandra's more interested in accurate information concerning portals and their workings.

At some point in the adventures, Lissandra is targeted by fanatics from the Society of the Locked Door, a group dedicated to forever sealing the portals of Sigil. This small (and up to this point insignificant) sect has recently stepped up its campaign by resorting to terrorism, sabotage, and assassination. As a proclaimed expert on portals, Lissandra sits at the top of the sect's hit list.

See *Uncaged: Faces of Sigil* for more information on Lissandra.

EXCUSE ME, CAN I ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS?

— LISSANDRA, ON BLOOD STEPPING THROUGH PORTAL

ALEENA JERKOT

(Pl/♀ githzerai/T7/Society of Sensation/NE)
Str 11, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 15

AC 4 (*leather armor +2*, Dex); MV 12; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (*short sword +2);* SZ M (6′ tall); MR 35%; ML elite (14).

Special Equipment: *Leather armor +2, short sword +2, dagger +1*, crossbow, excellent lockpicks (+10% chance to open locks).

Githzerai Abilities: 60′ infravision, 35% magic resistance.

Thief Abilities: PP 40%, OL 40%, F/RT 30%, MS 40%, HS 45%, DN 45%, CW 80%, RL 45%; backstab (×3).

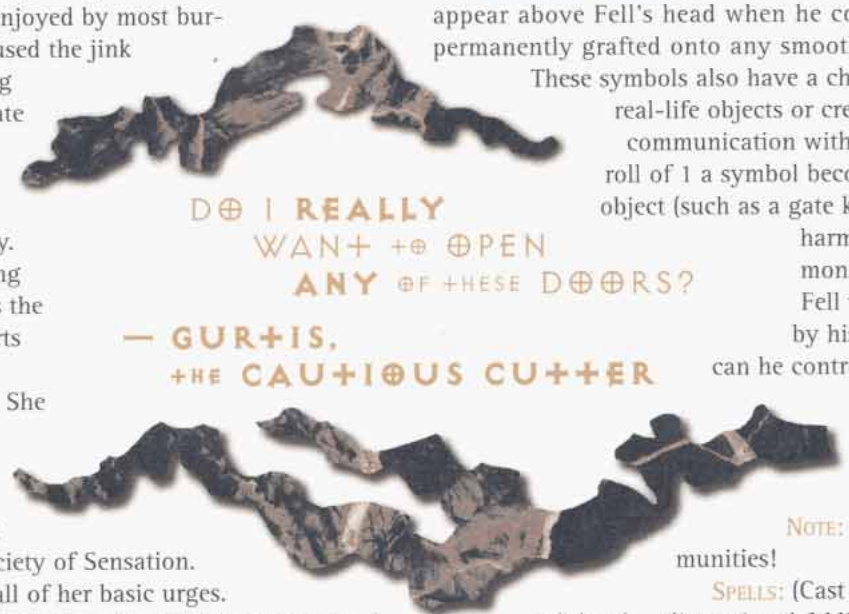
Aleena Jerkot started her career as a thief on the streets of Sigil. During her excursions, she saw how the high-ups lived in The Lady's Ward and quickly decided she wanted a lifestyle superior to that enjoyed by most burglars and cutpurses. She used the jink earned from a series of big scores to set up a legitimate business, Jerkot's Imports, and began building toward a life of opulence and decadent luxury.

In addition to carrying on legitimate trade across the multiverse, Jerkot's Imports also acts as a front for Aleena's illegal activities. She deals in planar contraband, buying and selling stolen goods. When both sides of the business took off, Aleena joined the Society of Sensation. Now, she lives to satisfy all of her basic urges.

Jerkot has long coveted the wide-reaching tendrils of the Planar Trade Consortium. In an effort to crush this competitor (or at least put them on a more equal footing with her organization), Aleena has started sending trading teams to the most dangerous locations in the multiverse to lock down exclusive rights to rare goods and services. Her teams have been remarkably successful, and though the Consortium's high-ups aren't worried, they have finally noticed the activities of Jerkot's Imports.

Aleena's latest gamble concerns the blinks known as the Four Doors. She's sure that whatever waits on the other side of these portals will earn her enormous amounts of wealth. When her agents in the Cage learned that Balthazar Thames possessed one of Estavan's portal ledgers, she assembled a team to "acquire" it. When the heroes step through the First Door, Aleena's thugs will already be there.

Unless the heroes really scare her off, Aleena and the thugs of Jerkot's Imports try to gain access to the other portals related to this blink cycle as the adventures proceed. In the end, she isn't interested in mercurials or mysteries, dead gods or fanatical cults. All she wants is to get her hands on the items that everyone else wants and the wealth that such items naturally bring.



FELL

(Px [Aoskar]/♂ dabus/HD 7/Sign of One/N)

AC 7; MV 12; HD 7; hp 46; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (dart); SA/SD symbols; SZ M (6′ tall); ML steady (12); Int very (12); XP 975.

Faction Notes: As a Signer, Fell receives an automatic save vs. spell to resist illusions. He suffers a –2 penalty to all encounter reaction checks.

Special Equipment: Blowgun, barbed darts.

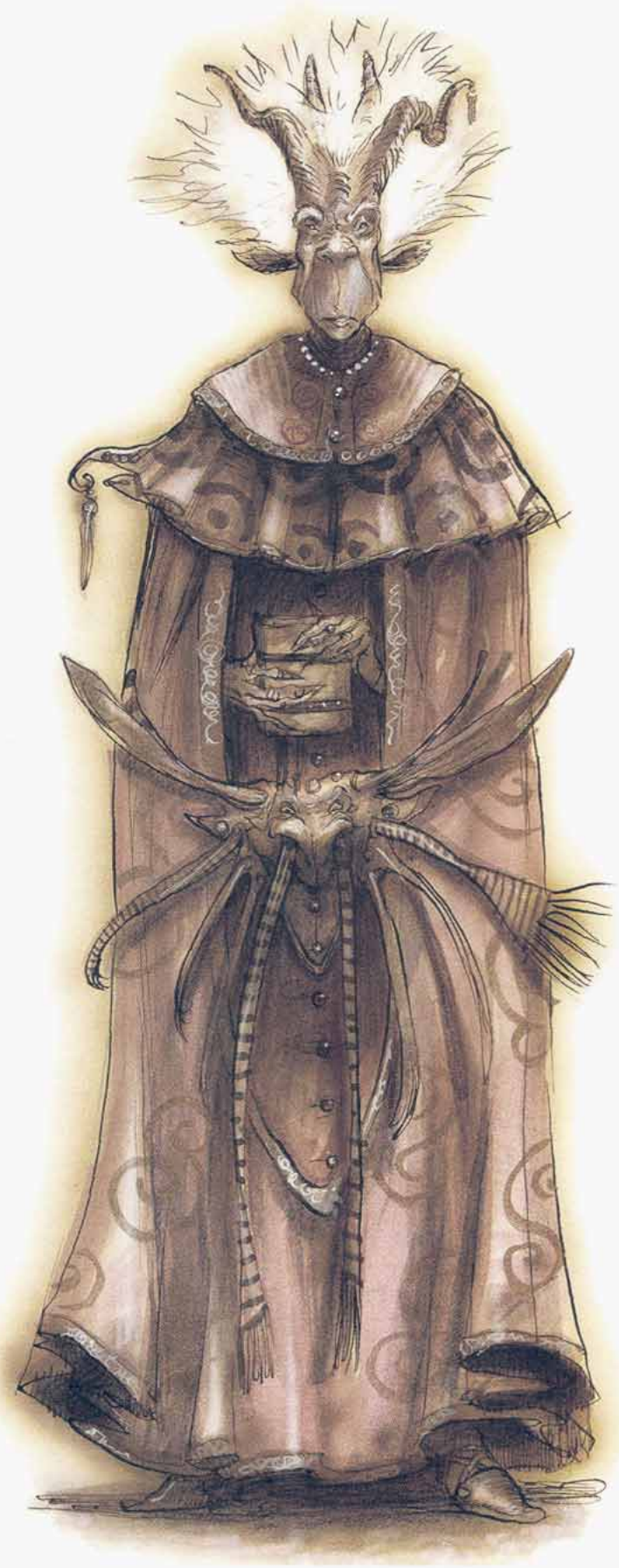
Special Abilities: Symbols – The picture symbols that appear above Fell's head when he communicates may be permanently grafted onto any smooth surface as a tattoo. These symbols also have a chance to become solid, real-life objects or creatures. Each round of communication with a PC, roll 1d20. On a roll of 1 a symbol becomes a real, beneficial object (such as a gate key). On a roll of 20, a harmful symbol (such as a monster) will become real. Fell will never be attacked by his symbols, but neither can he control them. Symbols that become real remain so for 1d4+4 turns before dissipating into nothingness.

Note: Fell has no dabus immunities!

Spells: (Cast as a 17th-level priest) 4th level – *dimensional folding, surelock*; 5th level – *plane shift*; 6th level – *forbiddance*; 7th level – *astral spell, gate.*

Fell is a rare sight in Sigil, a dabus whose feet *never* leave the ground. He was once like all the other dabus – silent, unapproachable, busy doing the Lady's work, but he joined the Lady's rival, Aoskar. That was Fell's undoing. Some say that when he declared himself a priest of Aoskar, it was the straw that broke the baku's trunk and caused the Lady to finally take action against the Keeper of Gateways. When the name of the portal god was written in the dead-book, Fell was banished from the dabus warrens and forced to live as the regular Cagers do.

The defrocked dabus runs a tattoo shop in the Market Ward, using his special ability to permanently graft his picture-symbols to smooth surfaces. The Lady of Pain leaves



Fell alone, but most other berks keep their distance just in case that situation were to suddenly change. Most, that is, but not all. Some gather in secret to watch Fell's vivid tales of Aoskar's glory. The audience always consists of those Signers who follow the Will of the One. They seek to restore Aoskar to life through the sheer force of thought so that he might take his place as Sigil's ultimate high-up.

Garmundi visited Fell's performance the night before he vanished. During the spectacle, he received a tattoo from Fell as a gift for his demonstration of faith – the holy symbol of Aoskar. This symbol, shown on the front-cover flap, was the key that allowed Garmundi to activate the Second Door and escape the wrath of the Harmonium.

During this series of adventures, Fell can provide information and assistance to the heroes. 'Course, if they appear to be working against Fell's better interests, he won't be as hospitable or helpful. The fallen dabus also comes under the scrutiny of the Society of the Locked Door, whose fanatical members try to slay Fell before the current blink cycle ends. Finally, Fell knows most of the important members of the Will of the One, including Origax, so he may also figure into the overarching plots through the Signers' involvement. Even so, the dabus rarely gets directly involved in events of the Cage. The only thing that might possibly sway him otherwise is some plan to save Garmundi.

See *Uncaged: Faces of Sigil* for more information concerning Fell.

THE SOCIETY OF THE LOCKED DOOR

Various berks and bashers belong to the small sect known as the Society of the Locked Door. Its members are dedicated to closing the portals of Sigil. They believe that the Cage has been made unclean by the many primes and unenlightened planars who regularly arrive through its gates. In the past, the sect concerned itself with handing out leaflets describing their beliefs, holding rallies, and occasionally picketing a known supplier of gate keys to the Clueless. They've changed tactics, however, and now they forcibly express their ideology through sabotage, terrorism, and even assassination.

Throughout this series of mini-adventures, the Society of the Locked Door makes itself known in an explosive and often violent manner. Details are provided in each adventure for involving the sect in the action, and statistics for sect members are given as well. In the final adventure, the sect takes a more prominent role when they hook up (unknowingly) with Lathuraz, the mercurial.

ORIGAX AND THE WILL OF THE ONE

(Pl/♂ human/M11/Sign of One/NG)
Str 9, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 17, Wis 9, Cha 11

AC –1 (*bracers of defense, ring of protection +3*); MV 12; hp 31; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+2 (*dagger +2*); SD *ring of protection +3*; SZ M (6′ tall); ML steady (12).

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: *Bracers of defense AC 2, ring of protection +3, dagger +2, robe of stars.*

SPELLS: (4/4/4/3/3) 1st – *burning hands, detect magic, magic missile, read magic*; 2nd – *blindness, invisibility, mirror image, warp sense*; 3rd – *dispel magic, fire ball, hold person, suggestion*; 4th – *confusion, ice storm, shout*; 5th – *contact other plane, shadow door, teleport.*

Origax not only prescribes to the tenets of the Sign of One, he also promotes the goals of the Will of the One, a subsect of the faction. Like others in the Will of the One, Origax seeks to demonstrate the validity of the faction's beliefs by bringing a dead god back to life through the process of concentrated thought alone. The dead god championed by the Will of the One is none other than Aoskar, the fallen god of portals.

Origax isn't the leader of this movement, but he is influential. As a prominent and wealthy wizard, Origax provides funds and sometimes a meeting place for other members of the subfaction. Whenever something comes along that may be of use to the movement, Origax doesn't hesitate to try to acquire it. That's the case with Estavan's ledger. When Origax learned of the tome, he funded the mission to "borrow" it from the ogre mage's office. He then hired Balthazar Thames to break its code before the blink cycle became active.



As the adventures unfold, Origax, his employees, and like-minded members of the faction try to retrieve the ledger. They also spy on the heroes to determine if they're friends or foes of the movement. If they're deemed to be friends, Origax tries to hire them to retrieve Garmundi the dwarf before the Athar do. Once Lathuraz is set free, the Will of the One disappears from the scene – such a creature is dangerous and has nothing to do with their current goals.

LATHURAZ THE MERCURIAL

Although there may be others like him beyond the Fourth Door, for all intents and purposes Lathuraz the Mercurial is a unique creature. As the first adventure begins, Lathuraz is close to escaping his prison on the prime world of Logicus. He knows that the blink cycle is about to commence, and he plans to be free when the portal back to Sigil becomes active. After that, his plans are simple. He wants to return to his own reality so that he may recharge his power. Then he wants to return to Sigil and use its portals to complete his conquest of the multiverse.

Lathuraz's statistics and vital information are presented at the end of this booklet.

CORANTHOL

(Pr/♂ elf/F6/Athar/CN)
Str 16, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 12

AC 3 (*chain mail +1*, Dex); MV 12; hp 49; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+2 (*long sword +1*, Str); SA Strength bonus (+1 damage); SZ M (5′ tall); ML elite (13).

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: *Long sword +1, chain mail +1, helm of teleportation.*

The Athar take an interest in the events surrounding these adventures from the beginning. Though they tolerated the barmy dwarf Garmundi in the past, once the preacher starting getting specific about Aoskar and other such matters the faction decided to clamp down hard. The assignment fell to Coranthol, a prime elf who has been working to prove his worth since he first embraced the chant of the Lost. It is Coranthol who orders the Harmonium bashers to arrest Garmundi. (The bashers are cooperating with the Athar in matters surrounding Garmundi and the Shattered Temple.) The elf might also approach the heroes about hunting down the dwarf once Garmundi disappears through the Second Door. If the heroes do anything to hinder the Harmonium's search or to harm the tenets of the Athar, Coranthol targets them as enemies of the law and the Lady. In short, Coranthol is an elf with something to prove, and the heroes don't want to get on his bad side.

Prologue: At the Shattered Temple

This prologue serves as the opening scene in *Doors to the Unknown*. It occurs whenever the heroes are in the vicinity of the Shattered Temple. Basically, it plays out the events that start with Garmundi's proclamation that "the Time of the Four Doors is at hand" and ends with the chaos that ensues when he leaps into a deep crack in the temple's foundation.

The heroes need to witness this event and hear Garmundi's words so that they may be drawn into the mystery of the Four Doors. While much of this scene revolves around action that's taking place away from the heroes, there's still plenty left for them to do. Some of these activities involve role-playing and meeting various characters who may play parts in the unfolding plot, but there're also a few opportunities for combat and quick thinking.

This scene ends with the arrival of enough Harmonium bashers to disperse the crowd. By this time, the heroes should have one or more leads that will get them involved in the adventures of the Four Doors. It's suggested that the invitation to visit Balthazar Thames be stressed as the first lead the heroes pursue, but any of the other leads can work with a few modifications.

WE BELIEVE.
THAT ALONE IS ENOUGH
TO BRING AOSKAR BACK.

— ORIGAX OF
THE WILL OF THE ONE

✦ While Heading For . . . ✦

It doesn't matter where the heroes are going to or where they're coming from, as long as they're passing near the Shattered Temple in Sigil's Lower Ward. When such an event occurs, the wheels that turn this series of mini-adventures can be set in motion.

As the heroes get deeper into the temple neighborhood, they might notice the increasingly larger crowds. Talk of something big happening at the temple drifts toward them. Eventually, the heroes get close enough to see what all the excitement is about. Read or paraphrase the following:

The streets around the Shattered Temple have always been alive with berks of varying backgrounds and intents, but you can't ever remember a time when they were literally thick with purposeful bodies. What's more, the mass of bodies (some looking more than a little barmy!) is heading toward the Shattered Temple. When was the last time anyone other than one of the Lost even dared enter the place, let alone set out like it was the place to go for a wild time? That's certainly how many of these sods look, with their wide smiles, bright eyes, and constant buzz of anticipation.

Find out what the heroes want to do and what their reactions are. Any heroes who specifically state that they're looking around see the following:

You notice more than one cutter in the crowd wearing the faction symbols of the Athar. Some are moving with the living tide, riding the wave toward the temple. A few, however, stick out as they try to push against the tide with purpose and a sense of urgency. Come to think of it, none of the Lost look particularly happy.

The heroes could try to move against the wave of bodies, but this would require a Strength check each round. If the check succeeds, a hero moves half his normal movement rate. If the check fails, the hero doesn't move at all, and he must make a Dexterity check to see if he keeps his balance. A failed Dexterity check indicates that the hero is knocked down and suffers 1d4+1 points of damage. Each round, the fallen hero must make a Strength check to try to stand up. A successful check indicates that the hero regains his footing, a failure means he stays down and suffers an additional 1d4+1 points of damage that round.

There's no problem moving with the wave of bodies. Those heroes who choose this route hear the following snippets of conversation. Read the following:

"What's the chant?" one berk asks another. "There's lawless talk and wild predictions being tossed at the temple," is the answer. "A dwarf preacher?" "Aoskar!" "Illegal!" "Breaking the law?" and "Deadbook for sure!" are the other snippets you hear from the many voices thundering around you.

TROUBLE IN THE CROWD

When the heroes reach the Shattered Temple, read or paraphrase the following text. Bear in mind that the scene only begins with these paragraphs. The main events continue as other encounters take place around the heroes. The heroes end up about 100 feet (and a countless number of people) away from Garmundi's makeshift pulpit. Have them become slightly separated in the crowd so that they can experience the subsequent scenes singly or in pairs. Read the following:

Eventually, the living tide carries you to the crowded street beside the temple. As always, the majority of spectators refuse to enter the actual ruins. Whether through superstition or genuine fear, they'd rather not set foot on the actual temple grounds. Still, the view isn't bad from here, and the acoustics produced by the tumbled pillars and partially standing walls allow the speaker's voice to carry.

"The time of the Four Doors is at hand!" shouts a filthy dwarf standing atop a crumbled pillar. He wears the rags of a beggar, but his eyes are bright and clear. They look out upon the crowd with peace and compassion, and his voice doesn't have the least hint of confusion. "These are the doors that are gone but always here, present but rarely accessible, the doors to the unknown places," he continues as the crowd grows even larger.

Pause Garmundi's speech here so that the heroes can react to other events taking place around them. It's not that Garmundi stops speaking (because he doesn't). It's just that his words are lost in the immediacy of the next event. Besides, everything the dwarf has to say that's the least bit important is worth saying three or four times before his sermon is through.

THE DISPLEASED ATHAR

Some of the heroes drift toward a group of Athar faction members who are observing the proceedings from a spot just inside the ruins, though not in close proximity to the dwarf. Among the six cutters wearing the symbol of the Lost are the elf Coranthol, a human wizard, a bariaur basher, and a human female in the fine robes of Sigil's upper class. These Athar are definitely displeased by the dwarf's per-

formance and the size of the crowd. One group of heroes overhears the following bits of conversation:

"Where are the Harmonium bashers I sent for?" the elf asks, scowling at a cheer from the crowd.

"I see a few gathering nearby, Coranthol," the female human assures him, "but you know they don't keep a large force here in the Lower Ward."

"That's a soddin' understatement," the bariaur spits. "They won't lift a mace or crack a skull until there's a soddin' army of them on hand—and that won't happen until they can break bashers free of their duties in the other wards."

"They'd better hurry, or the Lady herself might take notice," the wizard adds. "I certainly don't want her shadow falling on me. What do you plan to do with the dwarf when this is over, Coranthol?"

"Do you really need me to tell you that?" the elf says to the wizard as he gestures toward you. "You there, go fetch a Harmonium patrol for me."

The hero Coranthol points at can accept the task or tell the elf to sod off. If he accepts, the Harmonium basher acts rudely and seems ready to attack until the hero mentions who sent him. When the guard arrives, Coranthol tosses the hero a platinum piece for his trouble. If the hero refuses the task, Coranthol scowls and mutters something about the stupidity of the Clueless. He then gives the same order to another berk, who happily accepts the job. No matter what, at some point, the elf and the basher confer for a few seconds. Then, the basher returns to wait for the arrival of the rest of the Harmonium peacekeepers.



THE SERMON CONTINUES

Meanwhile, Garmundi's sermon continues. Read or paraphrase the following as the dwarf leaps about and shouts to the crowd:

"Who knows the dark of these doors?" the dwarf asks. "Who has the power to open them? Only one blood knows these doors. Only one blood can open them! On the day this blood opens the Four Doors, the multiverse will shake and shudder, the Cage will be unlocked, and the Lady will cry out in anguish and pain!"

The crowd gasps at the dwarf's powerful words. A murmur of excited voices ripples through the crowd, but the dwarf quiets them with a shout. "This is no bob, and I'm no barmy from Harbinger House!" the dwarf proclaims. "See the dark of it, 'cause tomorrow starts on the day the Fourth Door opens!"

THE WALKING DABUS

Another hero or two get forced toward the outer perimeter of the crowd. There, they see one of the Cage's more unusual sights—a dabus whose feet are planted firmly on the ground. Read or paraphrase the following:

More people push toward the edge of the temple property, forcing you a little farther from the dwarf's makeshift stage. You find yourself closer to the outside of the crowd, and surprisingly there's some excitement even out here. Something has the berks and barmies in this area rattling their bone-boxes, and it only takes you a moment to spot what it is.

There's a dabus moving through the crowd. He isn't floating above the jammed-together berks or even levitating slightly above the cobbled street as his kind is wont to do. Instead he's walking — actually walking, placing one foot in front of the other and letting each touch the dusty ground in turn.

The heroes may know Fell by reputation or have heard stories concerning a fallen dabus in the local pubs. Otherwise, someone in the crowd calls out:

"It's Fell! Let me through! I don't want to be near him when the Lady's shadow passes!"

If the heroes stay where they are, Fell walks directly toward them as he tries to reach a spot closer to the dwarf's stage. He trips as he approaches, taking a nasty tumble toward the hard ground below. If a hero wants to, he can make a Dexterity check to try to stop the dabus's fall. A failed attempt earns the hero a smile as Fell picks himself up and dusts himself off. A successful check earns a smile, a picture-symbol thank you, and a solid symbol reward. Select something appropriate that the heroes can use to help them in this scene such as a key to open Harmonium shackles, an Athar faction symbol, or a map that shows a quick exit out of this maze of streets.

THE INVITATION

This encounter must take place before Garmundi finishes his speech. One hero, situated anywhere in the crowd, receives an important invitation. If one of the heroes is a bard, a tiefling, or an elf, then this encounter should be aimed at him. Otherwise, any humanoid fighter type is targeted for the invitation. Read the following:

You may or may not agree with the dwarf's words, but his tone certainly is inspiring. You notice that the Hardheads are getting thicker along the edge of the crowd when someone taps you on the arm. You look down to see a pretty female tiefling smile up at you.

"Here," she says with a playful wink, "this is for you." She hands you a colorful calling card with a strange symbol etched in one corner. "If you ever need a trustworthy tout, ask for Kylie." With that, she slips off into the crowd and disappears from sight.

Hand the player the calling card printed on the cover flap. You can cut it off the flap (but don't let the players look at the back of the card) or make a photocopy for use with this adventure. This is the calling card of Balthazar Thames. Two additions adorn the card: a hand-written note inviting the hero to visit Thames' office in the Clerk's Ward and a strange symbol etched into one corner as though by magical means.

If the hero tries to chase Kylie (Pl/♀ tiefling/T8/Free League/N), the tout easily outdistances him and disappears in the crowd. Kylie doesn't know anything about these events anyway. She simply agreed to do a small job for Estavan the merchant lord, and she's done that in her usual quick and professional manner.

The calling card should eventually lead the heroes to Gray Dragon Lane and the adventure, "The First Door: The Thuldanin Gargoyle."

LET'S SEE WHERE THIS CROWD IS GOING.

— FIRST MISTAKE MADE BY NILOC THE YOUTHFUL HALF-ELF

CHOOSING SIDES

When a bunch of clueless sods come together, there're bound to be difficulties. When the reason for the gathering involves a volatile topic such as dead gods and forbidden lore, a smart remark can lead to blows. When such an event happens in front of the heroes, they have to choose sides – or decide to ignore the incident and mind their own business.

One or two heroes find themselves listening to Garmundi in the vicinity of a pair of bariaur bubbers and a sharp-tongued halfling. The halfling may be extremely rude and annoying, but that shouldn't give the drunken bariaur the right to trample the little guy into the dust. Or does it? That's what the heroes have to decide. Read the following:

While the dwarf goes on and on about doors and tomorrows, you notice a loud-mouthed halfling in the process of saying the wrong thing to a pair of angry, and obviously sodden, bariaur bashers.

"That dwarf's as barmy as a bell snail," the halfling shouts, poking an elbow into one of the bariaur's muscular legs. "You'd think he'd know better than to talk treason right where the Athar could hear him."

"Maybe he believes what he says," one of the bariaur snarls. "Yeah," the other agrees with a loud belch. "What's it to you, half-grown?"

"Halfling," the halfling corrects, not noticing the bariaur reaching for their weapons. "I was just pointing out, my foul-smelling friends, that you shouldn't tease a vorr in its cave."

The halfling continues, throwing even more obvious insults at the pair of bariaur until the bubbers finally react with unrestrained violence. If the heroes want to do the right thing, they should step in and try to defuse the hostilities.

If the heroes do intervene, they have a good chance of calming the bariaur down or at least buying them off with more bub. There's a 10% chance for each bariaur that the sod is too drunk and angry to back down, but even then, a superior display of force defuses the situation.

The halfling rewards the heroes for their trouble by giving them a *modron cube*. A modron cube is a small mechanical curiosity that reminds most primes and planars of a child's toy. It's really an intricate mathematical puzzle rendered in three-dimensional form. The heroes might not have any use for a modron cube now, but it could serve them well during the adventure beyond the Third Door.

If the heroes decide to ignore the halfling's plight, they witness the terrible beating the bariaur give him. Allow them a moment to feel guilty before moving on to the next encounter.

Bubbers (2) (Pl/♂ Bariaur/F1/Free League/N): THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club); AC 7; hp 10, 7; MV 12; SZ M (6′ tall); ML Avg (8); Int Avg (9); XP 15.

THE PROCLAMATION

As Garmundi's sermon nears its conclusion, one or two of the heroes witness an event that dramatically demonstrates the emotion associated with a cutter's personal beliefs. Read the following:

"One door for relics . . ." the dwarf preacher blazes from atop the broken pillar. The rest of his words are lost when you notice a young half-elf climbing onto a pile of garbage not yet collected by the trash wagon. The youth has a fire in his eyes, a burning passion usually reserved for the enlightened, the insane, and the plain stupid. From his expression, the youth appears to fall, at least partially, into the latter category.

"I believe!" the youth shouts, not even letting the dwarf finish telling him what it is he's converted to. "Aoskar, I will serve you! Garmundi, I will follow where you lead!"

At that moment, a huge basher displaying the colors of the Red Death pushes through the crowd toward the youth. "You have admitted your guilt," the basher proclaims. "I'll administer the punishment." He raises his halberd high into the air, ready to deliver a devastating blow. . . .



The heroes can intercede if they want, and probably without risking trouble from the Mercykillers. The youth hasn't been sentenced by the courts, so this Mercykiller has obviously decided to take the law into his own hands. If the heroes don't help the youth, he's cut down by a single blow of the Mercykiller's blade. The punishment for worshipping Aoskar is death, and the Mercykiller believes he's just doing his job (albeit by skipping the arrest and trial portions of the youth's crime).

If the heroes do try to help the youth, they have to stop that first blow from falling. This can be accomplished by almost any quick action, but the Mercykiller will then turn on the heroes, forgetting all about the youth.

Whatever the heroes decide to do, they should realize that the Mercykiller thinks he's just doing his job – even if the heroes don't agree with it. For this reason, the heroes shouldn't try to kill the basher. In fact, if they do kill him they'll be hunted down later to answer for the crime. Knocking the basher out or distracting him and escaping into the crowd are acceptable solutions to this problem.

Red Death Basher (Pl/♂ Human/F3/Mercykiller/LE): THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (halberd); AC 3 (plate mail); hp 18; MV 12; SZ M (6′ tall); ML steady (11); Int avg (10).

THE SERMON ENDS

Garmundi's sermon draws to an end with this final proclamation. Read the following:

"One door for relics, forgotten and discarded," the dwarf continues, his eyes now darting from the scowling Athar cutters to the gathering Harmonium bashers. "A second door for powers, set aside and lost. A third door for mysteries, waiting to be freed. A fourth door for reality, to tie them together and reveal the path to tomorrow's better shores."

With this, the Harmonium arrives to break up the festivities.

✦ CRASHING THE PARTY ✦

This scene ends as expected – with the arrival of a small army of Harmonium bashers intent on dispersing the crowd. The heroes simply have to watch what transpires with Garmundi, then avoid being arrested or otherwise damaged by the enthusiastic, club-wielding Hardheads. Read the following:

The dwarf finishes his description of the four doors, and you get a good look at his face for the first time. Besides the

dirt and tangled hair and beard, his exposed forehead is decorated with a colorful tattoo. It's a picture of an elaborate key. The pommel of the key is shaped like a glowing door frame bounding a black field of silver stars. For a moment, it seems like the dwarf is looking right at you, and then he smiles and the warmth of a sun spreads through you.

That's when you notice the group of Athar from the corner of your eye. The elf, obviously the leader of the group, raises his hand, signaling to one of the Harmonium bashers. A terrible horn sounds, and suddenly the largest collection of Hardheads you've ever seen moves into the crowd. Some of the bashers arrest sods in the crowd, but the majority of the force clears a path toward the dwarf preacher. Crisp orders, strong arms, and the occasional swing of a heavy club opens the way, and panic spreads through the audience.

The heroes won't be able to help Garmundi in this encounter. There're going to have their hands full trying not to be trampled by the crowd or arrested by the Harmonium. If the heroes are still separated at this point, pick one of the following encounters to run for each group of heroes. If they're in one place, run them in the order they're presented in. After that, go on to the conclusion in "Might as Well Jump."

FIGHTING THE WAVE

As the Hardheads part the crowd, panic causes large waves of humanity to rush in various directions. One wave rushes toward the heroes, and they have to accomplish a few things to escape unharmed.

First, determine the size of the wave coming toward each group of heroes. (If they're in one place, only one wave is needed.) Roll 1d10: 1–2 small wave; 3–7 medium wave; 8–10 large wave.

Second, each hero must make a successful Dexterity check with a –3 penalty each round that the wave lasts to avoid the crushing surge. The number of rounds is based on the size of the wave: small, 2 rounds; medium, 3 rounds; large, 4 rounds. If a check succeeds, the hero manages to avoid the press of the panicked crowd. If any check fails, go on to the third point.

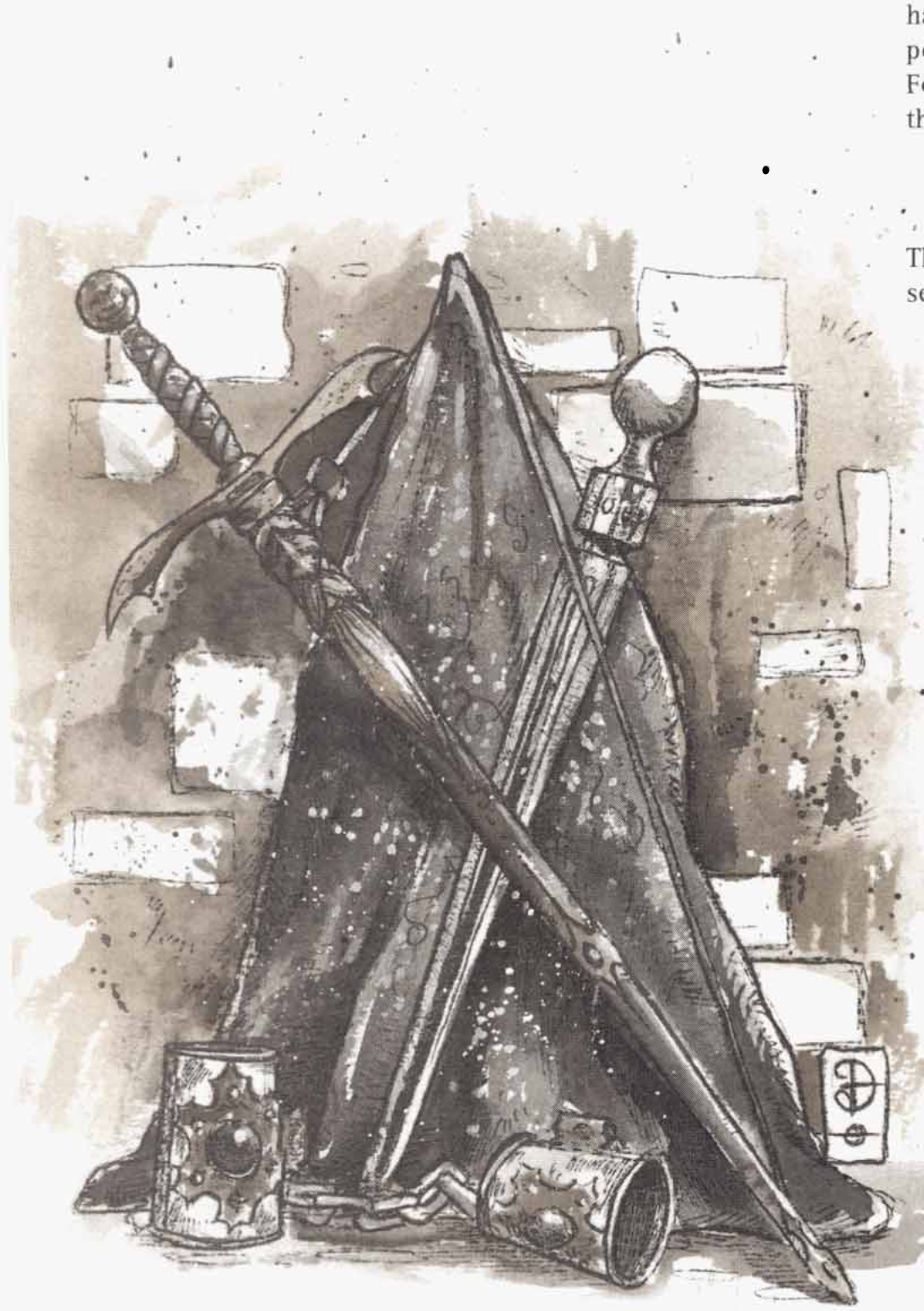
Third, each time a hero fails a Dexterity check, he needs to make a successful Strength check to avoid being overrun and trampled. The first Strength check is made with a –1 penalty. Each subsequent Strength check requires increasingly harsher penalties: –3, –5, and –7. The moment a Strength check fails, the hero is knocked to the ground. In that round (and in any subsequent rounds remaining for the size of the crowd) the hero suffers 1d6+1 points of damage.



ZARULAZ'S ITEMS

The heroes may not know this from the beginning, but they're going to want to gather Zarulaz's items to use against Lathuraz in the fourth adventure. These items are listed below, along with the door behind which each is hidden. For details about any of these items, see the adventure where that item is hidden. (For example, details on the *rod of mercury* are found in "The First Door.")

- *Rod of mercury*: hidden behind the First Door, locates mercurials.
- *Cloak of trapping*: hidden behind the Second Door, binds mercurials.
- *Sword of Lathuraz*: hidden behind the Third Door, damages mercurials.
- *Manacles of lesser reality*: hidden behind the Third Door, renders mercurials helpless.



SUMMARY OF THE ADVENTURES

The heroes first learn of the Four Doors when they hear Garmundi speak at the Shattered Temple. Thereafter, they can seek out more information of their own accord or be prodded into action by a series of seemingly random incidents that push them toward the Four Doors. Note that these four adventures work best when they are interspersed among a current campaign plot. The first one or two adventures herein can be used as a change of pace from a DM's current storyline. By the third adventure, the mystery of the Four Doors might become the driving force in the campaign for a time – at least until the two months end and the doors blink out of existence again.

It's suggested that the adventures be played in the order presented. Of course, if the heroes decide to pursue the doors in a different order, they should be allowed to. The DM may have to adjust certain encounters to better fit the heroes' experience levels, however. The only strict rule is that the Fourth Door can't be opened until the heroes have overcome the mysteries of the other three doors.

THE PROLOGUE ENCOUNTER

The first encounter in the mystery of the Four Doors is presented in the Prologue. It involves the events depicted in "The Tale of the Four Doors" wherein the heroes listen to Garmundi the street preacher and then get caught up in the chaos that ensues. They may have to battle a Harmonium basher or two before the scene plays out or sidestep the stampeding crowd in some manner. By the end of this encounter, the heroes have heard about the Four Doors, witnessed the disappearance of Garmundi, learned of the Athar's desire to find the dwarf, and received a strange calling card inviting them to a loft in the Clerk's Ward. Any of these incidents can lead them to one of the first two adventures.

ADVENTURE 1: THE FIRST DOOR

The heroes respond to the invitation on the calling card. They have been offered employment by Balthazar Thames, a self-proclaimed "solver of mysteries" with an office on Gray Dragon Lane in the Clerk's Ward. In reality, the invitation comes from Estavan the merchant lord, who needs the heroes to recover his ledger (it was "borrowed" from his office while he was conducting business outside Sigil).

Through a complicated series of blinds and hidden plots, Estavan secretly set Thames up in an office that would one day be visited by the blink known as the First Door. It was Estavan's hope that by the time the blink cycle started again, Thames would be of sufficient confidence and

The First Door: the Thuldanin Gargoyle

This adventure is designed for four to six player character heroes of 2nd to 4th level. As always, a mix of character classes provides the best chances for success.

In the "Prologue," the heroes received a calling card. Printed on the card was all of the pertinent information concerning one Balthazar Thames, a "solver of mysteries" with an office on Gray Dragon Lane in the Clerk's Ward. A handwritten scrawl across the top of the card reads "Your help is required. Please come as soon as you can." In the bottom right-hand corner, inscribed as if by magical means, is a strange icon, depicting the head of a gargoyle, his stony mouth locked in a grim expression. (This card is printed on the front-cover flap.)

How the heroes respond to this invitation is entirely up to them. If they decide to check out Balthazar Thames before going to his office, start with "A Tour of Gray Dragon Lane." If they decide to simply head to the office, start with "The Second-Floor Loft." Note, however, that in the latter case there may still be an encounter or two that you'll want to use from the first section.

THE KEY?
JUST HOLD YOUR BREATH
WHEN YOU JUMP
AND THINK HAPPY THOUGHTS.
THAT'LL BE 25 GP.
NEXT!

— EXODOR THE KEY SELLER,
SERVING CLUELESS
ON THE CORNER OF
LADY'S ROW AND RAZORVINE

This adventure begins on Gray Dragon Lane, but the real action doesn't take place until the First Door is activated and the heroes arrive on the Plane of Acheron (in the layer of Thuldanin) in an isolated junkyard full of forgotten relics and discarded – often dangerous – items. When the heroes accomplish their goals, they return to Sigil, and this adventure ends.

Slipping the Blinds: What if the heroes never received the calling card or refused to take it from Kylie in the prologue encounter? What if they decide not to accept the invitation? In any of these cases, the DM has to reinforce the lead so that the heroes decide to investigate it. This can be done by having Kylie approach the heroes again, this time offering a bit more than just a mysterious invitation. She might say, "Go to Gray Dragon Lane, and you'll receive more jink than you can imagine" or "You've been summoned by one of Sigil's high-ups. I know *I* wouldn't ignore such a summons."

A Tour of Gray Dragon Lane

Gray Dragon Lane is a narrow street that extends off Thistlewind Way. It's really little more than an alley, packed tight with a number of one- and two-story buildings. Though the shadows here are deep, the lane feels cozy, not

crowded. The buildings are described as the heroes would approach them from Thistlewind Way, with a few significant encounters thrown in just to keep things interesting. Refer to the map on the back-cover flap when conducting these encounters.

#1 GRAY DRAGON LANE

The small, one-story building at the beginning of the street bears a swinging placard decorated with a book and a wand, marking it as a wizard's shop. Indeed, this is The Tome of Magic, a tiny shop that carries only the most common spell components. If a wizard needs something really rare, he has to go elsewhere. The shop also boasts spells for sale. For a price, wizards can copy a spell from the great spellbook chained to a podium near the back of the shop's main room. The book contains a limited number of 1st- and 2nd-level spells.

For any spell a wizard seeks to purchase, roll 1d6. On a roll of 1 or 2, the spell is available. However, the book only contains eight 1st-level spells and six 2nd-level spells. Once that many spells have been purchased, no more can be copied. Spells cost 500 gp per level, so a 2nd-level spells costs 1,000 gp.

Chelsy Darkhair (Pl/♀ human/M6/Society of Sensation/NG) owns the shop, and if the place is open, she's there. Though the shop holds little of interest to high-level wizards, it meets the basic needs of those just starting their careers. The place also serves as a club of sorts for low-level wizards, scholars, and those who want to pursue either of those professions. Chelsy keeps a pot of water boiling for tea, and her wine rack is always open to the regulars.

If the heroes ask questions about Balthazar Thames, Chelsy and her customers (she always has at least three sitting around the small tables scattered among the bins of tiny bells, balls of wool, lumps of wax, and colorful feathers) turn cold and regard the heroes with suspicion. They consider Thames a friend, and the regulars at The Tome of Magic always protect their friends.

With kind words, expressions of innocent intent, and the purchase of a spell or two, Chelsy eventually imparts the following information. Read the following:

"I haven't banged around with Balthazar for a few days," Chelsy admits. "He's been popular of late. I've seen Lissandra the Gate-Seeker visit recently, and there was that top-shelf spellslinger. He was so desperate to find Balthazar that the jink was literally poppin' out of his robes. Is there a cross-trade goin' on here?"

Chelsy explains who Lissandra is if the heroes ask, though she rolls her eyes like she's talking to some Clueless berks. As for the spellslinger, all she knows is that he looked rich, extremely experienced, and anything but a spring hatchling! "He was 80 if he was a day," she proclaims, "and I marked him as a Signer, that's for sure." He said he had a job for Thames, so she directed him toward building 8b.

#2A/B GRAY DRAGON LANE

This two-story building features a drawing of a comfortable bed on a sign hanging over the front door. This is Lady Drayon's (Pl/♀ human/C2/Believers of the Source/NG) boarding house. She rents rooms by the week to cutters and Clueless alike, and there's always at least one new arrival to the Cage nestled safely in her home. For the most part, the residents of the boarding house refuse to discuss anything with strangers. Even the touts and lightboys who call this place their case don't like to get involved in business during their off hours. At best, the heroes learn that Thames's office is a few doors down the lane.

#3A/B GRAY DRAGON LANE

This two-story building houses Silverhorn's General Store on the lower level and the owner's living quarters on the upper level. Silverhorn (Pl/♂ tiefling/T1/Free League/LN), his human wife, and their three children run the general store. The store carries all the standard adventuring supplies like food,

water, rope, and torches (no weapons or armor, though), as well as goods needed by the Cagers who live in the neighborhood. All Silverhorn knows about Thames is that he's a good customer who always pays his bills on time and has a kind word for those he encounters.



#4A/B GRAY DRAGON LANE

The Scribe's Rest, a friendly pub, occupies the lower level of this two-story townhouse. The upper level features the proprietor's apartment and a few rooms for his staff. Many of the clerks who live in the neighborhood bang around this pub once the day's work ends. Anyone with jink who isn't looking to start trouble is welcome here.

The proprietor, Hofften Burrfoot (Pr/♂ kender/T3/Free League/CG) stocks many Cager favorites, including a collection of ales from around the Outer Planes and a few brews of his own creation. He offers a night of free food and drink to the blood who can consume one mug from each of the Outer Planes over the course of a single evening.

'Course, consuming 16 different types of ale in an eight-hour period (two mugs an hour) and not suffering any ill effects requires a powerful Constitution. A hero engaged in this contest makes a Constitution check each hour. The first check receives a –1 penalty, the second check a –2 penalty, and so on until the final check, which receives a –8 penalty. If a check fails, the hero collapses into unconsciousness, and Burrfoot lets him sleep it off in a quiet corner of the pub. If a hero succeeds at all eight checks, Burrfoot congratulates him and gives the hero a certificate which entitles the bearer to a night of free food and drink at The Scribe's Rest.

When the heroes get around to asking, most of the customers know where Thames's office is located, but none personally know the famed solver of mysteries. If the heroes ask Burrfoot about Balthazar, the kender answers, "If you have business with me, order a mug of something cold. I recommend the Bytopian bi-level mead. It has two distinctive tastes that must be consumed to be believed. If you have business with Mr. Thames, however, I suggest you conduct it at his office."

#5A/B GRAY DRAGON LANE

This two-story structure appears run down and abandoned. Boards have been nailed over almost all the doors and windows. In fact, the only spot where boards don't seal the building's openings is on the second-floor facing the street. There, two boards have been removed from one of the windows. If the heroes look around the street for the boards, they don't see them anywhere.

If the heroes examine the exterior of this building, have each of them make a Wisdom check with a –4 penalty. Any hero who fails the check has a strange feeling but can't pinpoint the source. Any hero who makes the check catches a brief flash of light on metal in the dark recesses of the open window.

If the heroes decide to enter the building, they need to find a way in. The obvious way is through the open window on the second floor, but this requires some kind of spell (such as *levitate* or *fly*) or a thief's climbing skill. The wall provides a +40% modifier due to the many cracks that can serve as handholds. Of course, a lone climber must defend himself once he enters the open window. (See below for details.)

Another way in involves searching the exterior of the building. If the heroes enter the alley that runs between the building and the general store, they discover that the boards once nailed across the side door have been removed and carefully set against the wall. This door leads the heroes to a large hall on the ground floor.

The ground floor was once an art studio of some sort, and statues made of stone and wood still haunt the shadowy expanse of the lower hall. Only the faintest traces of light penetrate this hall, thin slices that cut through cracks in the boarded windows and doors. The statues aren't finished, but some are more complete than others. Most are renderings of mundane animals – deer, horses, large cats – but a few depict planar creatures, including a foo dog, a bebilith, and a nightmare. There's a staircase in the far corner of the hall that leads up into darkness.

The Real Chant: A few days ago, the building was being used by Jerkot's thugs to spy on Thames (the open window looks directly into Thames's office). That's how the thugs discovered that Thames had Estavan's ledger. The thugs abandoned the building to ambush Thames and then went through the First Door.

Today, the Society of the Locked Door came looking for a place to use and found the abandoned building waiting for them. Unknown to the heroes, a few members of the Society of the Locked Door are currently using the building as a staging area for their latest act of terrorism. The flash of light reflects off the dagger of one of the fanatics, who's watching the street from the open window.

The fanatics are nervous due to the start of their first real campaign to put their beliefs into action. If the heroes have been asking a lot of questions in the neighborhood, the fanatics' paranoia kicks in, and they think they've been discovered. They wait for the first opportunity to attack the heroes – for the sake of the Society of the Locked Door, of course.

Slipping the Blinds: If the heroes ignore the seemingly abandoned building, the fanatics hiding within attack once the heroes turn their backs and start toward Thames's office. (See the encounter that follows.)

If any heroes find a way to enter through the open window, they are immediately set upon by the fanatics. See the encounter below for statistics.

If any of the heroes enter through the lower level and ascend the staircase, the fanatics attack them when they reach the top. See the encounter below for statistics and other details.

ENCOUNTER: BLADE AND LEAFLET

The fanatics of the Society of the Locked Door have set up shop on Gray Dragon Lane. If the heroes are exploring the street, this encounter takes place either after they turn their backs on building 5 and head toward Thames's office or when they enter building 5 for any reason. If they enter after seeing something in the window (see the details above), then they aren't surprised by the fanatics.

If the heroes decided to forego the exploration of Gray Dragon Lane and headed straight for Thames's office, this encounter takes place as they pass the alley between the general store and the abandoned building.

When any of these events occur, the fanatics of the Society of the Locked Door attack. The fanatics have come to this neighborhood looking for Thames. They've heard he's working on a case involving portals, and they're hoping to scare him into dropping the investigation. Additionally, they know he sometimes bangs around with Lissandra the Gate-Seeker and other bloods who know the dark of portals. Any such bloods that the Society can terrorize are victories in their cause.

During this adventure (the first week of this eight-week blink cycle), the Society resorts to violence and may even badly injure a hero, but they haven't yet turned to murder. So, the best they hope to accomplish is to strike, cause some damage, hand out a leaflet stating their beliefs and goals, and then escape.

If any of the members of the Society are captured, the Society abandons its headquarters and establishes a new one elsewhere. Because of this, it doesn't matter what any captured fanatics reveal. What was true before a captured fanatic talks won't be true afterward.

Low-Level Fanatics (6) (Pl/Var Var/F2/CN): THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); AC 8; hp 11 each; MV 12; SZ M (6′ tall); ML steady (12); Int avg (8); XP 35.

#6 GRAY DRAGON LANE

This single-floor building contains the offices of Ragnaal and Fluuz, who provide scribes to those who require such services. This pair of bariaurs and the scribes who work for them have often prepared legal documents for Balthazar Thames, but they can't provide very much useful information to the heroes.

#7 GRAY DRAGON LANE

Another one-story building with a white-stone facade and well-appointed pillars, this structure houses the clerks of Davots, Trillian, and Snoob, Ltd. The place stands in stark contrast to the abandoned building next door, though the heroes won't find much help here today. It's a holiday in the realm of Mount Clanggedin, on the plane of Arcadia, and two of the three partners in the firm are dwarves with ties to that great mountain. For that reason, the firm is closed, and its employees are off enjoying the holiday.



NEVER GET INVOLVED
IN THE BLOOD WAR.
NEVER DRINK
FERMENTED PORTAL OOZE
AFTER SEVEN LANTERNS,
AND NEVER TURN YOUR BACK
ON A MERCHANT LORD.

— THE CHANT
IN THE MARKET WARD



#8A/B GRAY DRAGON LANE

Two businesses occupy this two-story building. The lower floor houses the sweet aromas of Paltry's Pastries. The upper floor contains the office and apartment of Balthazar Thames, self-proclaimed solver of mysteries and finder of lost objects. The door to Thames's office is on the left. A window full of cakes and pies of all descriptions sits to the right of the door. The entrance to the pastry shop is at the far right.

A rotund and happy woman named Paltry (Pl/♀ human/F0/Sign of One/CG) owns the pastry shop. She also does all the baking, and nine times out of ten, it's her smiling face and motherly tone that greet customers. If the heroes enter the shop, she offers them samples of her delicious wares and asks, "How many Amorian berry rolls can I wrap for you?" If the heroes buy something and mention that they're looking for Thames, her smiling face grows dark. Read the following:

"The poor man!" Paltry wails. "My boy Meager was making a delivery over on Thistlewind Way when he saw the Caring Sisters of the Healing Hovel cart him away. He was beaten pretty badly. If you must have the awful details, his assistant, Beranda, may be able to tell you more. Oh, the poor man!"

Once the heroes swing open the door to Balthazar's half of the building, go on to "The Office of Balthazar Thames" below.

#10 GRAY DRAGON LANE

This one-story boarding house rents rooms by the day. Most of its tenants are planar travelers conducting business in the Clerk's Ward. As such, the heroes can learn very little about Thames at this location, but it makes a great place for planting hooks for future plots – if a DM is inclined to use it for such matters.

THE OFFICE OF ✦ BALTHAZAR THAMES ✦

The door to the left of the window full of pies has an elegant scrawl across it that reads:

#8B
BALTHAZAR THAMES
SOLVER OF MYSTERIES,
FINDER OF LOST OBJECTS,
FRIEND FOR HIRE
– One Flight Up –

When the heroes turn the knob, the door swings inward to reveal a wide staircase that climbs to a wide landing and another door. Sitting on the stairs, looking for all the world like he's wedged in tight, is Estavan of the Planar Trade Consortium. How an 11-foot-tall ogre with large, ivory horns managed to get into this space isn't at all apparent, but Estavan smiles pleasantly and asks the hero carrying the calling card, "Balthazar Thames, I presume?" Note that he doesn't need to see the card to pick out the appropriate hero. He uses the same criteria that Kylie did when she chose the hero in the first place (or maybe he has some ability that isn't immediately apparent). Read the following:

"I've been waiting for you for hours," the blue-skinned giant sighs. "Still, I realize you have mysteries to solve and objects to find. Which, in fact, is the reason I've come calling. Where are my manners? Allow me to introduce myself. I am Estavan, merchant lord of the Planar Trade Consortium."

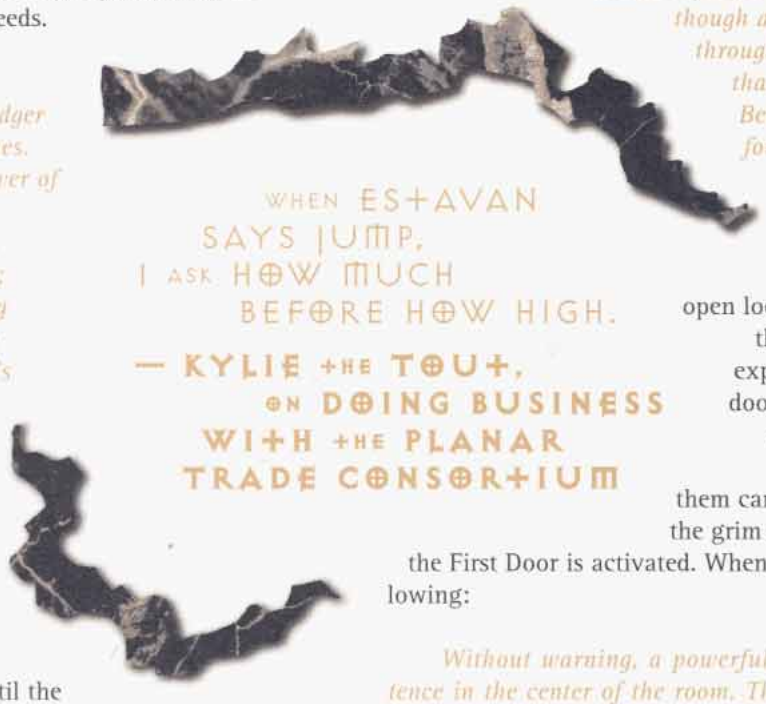
Even if the heroes have never heard of the Consortium (What are they? Clueless?) they should be impressed by the sound of the organization's name, the title Estavan bestows on himself, and the very stature of the ogre mage. Estavan knows that the hero he's addressing isn't Thames, but he's willing to feign ignorance for as long as the hero wants to impersonate the sleuth. (In fact, Estavan knows exactly who the heroes are. He's watched them since they arrived in the Cage, monitored their previous adventures, and specifically chosen them to assist him in this endeavor.) If the hero confesses that he's not Thames, Estavan stops him before he can say anything else and exclaims:



"Of course! You must be one of Balthazar's famed associates. I know you can help me recover the item that I've lost!"

Without moving from the stairs (it doesn't look like he's ever going anywhere again anyway), Estavan explains what kind of help he needs. Read the following:

"Someone has stolen a ledger from my office," Estavan relates. "It's a large volume with a cover of silver scales and a distinctive icon in the lower right corner. You should recognize it easily; the icon is a stylized rendering of a grim gargoyle. I believe it was taken by agents of Jerkot's Imports, one of my more troublesome competitors. Retrieve the ledger and bring it to my office on Pride Street, near the Hall of Records. Do this, and I will pay you thrice your usual fee."



Estavan keeps talking until the heroes agree to take the job. Then he thanks them and adds a warning to be careful of Jerkot's agents. "They can be . . . unpleasant," the ogre mage admits. After the heroes agree to help, Estavan provides one more push to get them moving in the right direction. Read the following:

"By the way, I noticed that the door up here has been forced open," the ogre mage informs you. "I've been calling, but there doesn't seem to be anyone about. I would have checked the situation out, but I had enough trouble just getting this far into the building. Thames's lovely assistant, Beranda, should've answered. I do hope she's all right."

The door was forced open by Jerkot's thugs when they arrived to activate the First Door. Estavan hopes the heroes will enter the office while carrying the card with the grim gargoyle symbol etched upon it. The symbol is the key that activates the portal, which will take the heroes to the same place as Estavan's stolen ledger.

When the heroes reach the door at the top of the landing, go on to "Indoor Whirlwind."

INDOOR WHIRLWIND

The heroes have to practically climb over Estavan to reach the door at the top of the landing. The door is partially open, and they can see that the interior room has been wrecked. Read or paraphrase:

The open door to the office reveals a large room. A thick carpet covers the floor, but that's the only indication that the room was once an opulent office. The furniture has been tossed about and broken. It litters the area closest to the four walls. Papers lie scattered everywhere, as though a great wind storm passed through. There's no sign of Balthazar Thames, his assistant Beranda, or the thieves who forced open the door.

If a thief in the party checks the door and makes a successful open locks check, he notices that the lock was sprung by an expert thief. No traps on the door or other hazards can be spotted. When the heroes enter the room, if one of them carries the calling card with the grim gargoyle symbol upon it, the First Door is activated. When this occurs, read the following:

Without warning, a powerful cyclone spins into existence in the center of the room. The forceful currents of air grab hold of you, twirling you like leaves in a fall breeze. The furniture and scattered papers are caught up in the unnatural wind storm as well, and a few heavy pieces fly dangerously close to your head. The wind howls louder, you spin faster, and then a bright light explodes in the center of the room. The light reminds you of the effect that accompanies a trip through a portal, and then everything changes.

The heroes have stepped through the First Door and been whisked to the second layer of Acheron, Thuldanin.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: What if the heroes aren't carrying the calling card? Estavan notices that nothing happens when they enter the office, so he takes matters into his own hands. He has another key ready for just such an occurrence, and he tosses it to the nearest hero inside the room. This gargoyle face is carved on a small, flat stone. When any hero touches the stone, the portal is activated.

THE GARGOYLE'S JUNKYARD

The First Door deposits travelers inside a hollow cube floating on the plane of Acheron. The cube drifts among other cubes in the second layer of Thuldanin, hiding in plain sight among thousands of similar objects. The cube has no visible exits or entrances other than the First Door (which appears as a great iron arch on this side) and a few other bounded spaces that might be portals. The items that find their way to

this isolated junkyard are the things the rest of the multiverse wants to desperately forget. How they come to be here is a mystery, but it's obvious that they do.

The junkyard is literally filled with discard from other worlds, but there still seems to be room for more. The piles of scrap form a maze of canyons between the mountain-walls of junk. Much of the junk has been affected by the insidious magic of the plane and turned to ironlike stone. Newer additions to the place, and even a few ancient items of strange and unusual design, have thus far managed to ward off the petrifying magic. Among these items are a mysterious staff of familiar design and the junkyard's guardian, a gearwork golem that's still fighting some forgotten war.

Unless something goes terribly wrong, the heroes shouldn't be here long enough to be affected by the petrifying magic of the plane. However, to demonstrate the dangers inherent to the place, one of Jerkot's thugs succumbs to the magic so that they might see the effects firsthand.

The map of the junkyard, which can be found on the inside of the cover, shows the general layout of the place and provides a few encounters. The primary threats are the gearwork golem, Jerkot's thugs, and a few items that are still in working order (like a fireball bomb developed by the war wizards of a highly magical prime world). The great iron arch that houses the portal back to Sigil can also be considered as a threat. The grim gargoyle symbol worked fine as a gate key to this place, but a different key is required for the return trip: a blood-red gem located in the chest of a gargoyle statue (see below). The heroes have to figure out that this is the key in order to return to Sigil.

The conditions inside the hollow cube aren't pleasant. It's extremely cold here, not quite freezing but far from warm. The cold radiates from the metal of the cube's interior walls, and the ironlike stone throughout the junkyard saps the warmth from living flesh. There's no water or plant life anywhere, and the only living creatures (other than the heroes and the thugs) are a few dozen rust monsters feeding on the scrap. A dim light illuminates the junkyard, casting the shadows of the petrified items in all directions. The light has no apparent source, but the heroes can see by it just the same.

WHAT THE HEROES WANT

What do the heroes want from this corner of Thuldanin? That depends. They know they want Estavan's ledger. It can be found slung over the shoulder of Trash, one of Jerkot's thugs who leads the gang currently looting the junkyard (see location 10).

The heroes also want the dabus message written on a mountain of garbage (location 6), though they probably don't know this yet. This message, however, is part of a three-part key to the Fourth Door.

To activate the portal back to Sigil, the heroes need a gate key that's hidden in the grim gargoyle statue (see location 2).

Finally, there's another item that the heroes might want: the *rod of mercury*, a magical item designed to locate a mercurial like Lathuraz. The *rod of mercury* is a three-foot-long cylinder of translucent crystal. An amount of mercury contained within the crystal rod glows and shifts when in the vicinity of a mercurial. The mercury actually pulls at one end of the rod or the other to direct the wielder toward the mercurial. A *detect magic* spell causes the rod to radiate a magical aura. Currently, the rod rests around the neck of the gearwork guardian (see location 9).

ARRIVAL

The heroes find themselves tumbling through a cyclone one minute, and the next they're stepping calmly through a great iron arch into a dimly lit cavern. Read the following:

The wind twirls you around at dizzying speeds, and then you realize that your feet are gently stepping onto a flat, solid surface. Your boots come down with an iron clang, and you notice that the wind has died down and the light has dimmed. Indeed, the office is gone. Instead, you're standing inside a huge cavern with metal walls and mountains of strange items. On closer inspection, the items all seem to be made of the same ironlike stone – all, that is, except for the one atop a pillar of junk directly in front of you. A gargoyle of gray stone sits atop the makeshift pillar, its face locked in the same grim expression as the one worn by the icon on the calling card.

The heroes have arrived in the gargoyle's junkyard in Thuldanin. Use the map to let them wander as they will. All of the numbers below are keyed to the map, describing each specific encounter. You may want to come up with a list of strange items to add to the ones presented here in case the heroes ask lots of questions or really get into exploring the junkyard.

1. THE GREAT IRON ARCH

This side of the portal appears as a great iron arch standing freely in a clearing of the junkyard. It rises 20 feet into the sky, made of a twisted column of black iron some three feet in diameter. The open space between the arch spans a width of 12 feet. The arch has no markings, or runes of any sort, but it does have at least a hundred tiny red gems somehow imbedded in the iron (altogether worth only 25 gp). The metal is cold to the touch.

If the heroes try to step back through the arch, nothing happens. The portal doesn't activate. They don't travel back to Sigil – or to anywhere else, for that matter. The dark of it is, the gate key that got them here isn't the one that'll get them back. They'll have to figure out what the return key is (it's the blood-red gem in the grim gargoyle) and find it somewhere in the junkyard. *Warp sense* does not work on this door.

2. THE GRIM GARGOYLE

The junkyard's mascot is a gargoyle of grim expression and gray stone, locked in eternal rest atop a pillar of petrified junk. It's about twice the size of a human. This isn't a monster gargoyle – it won't suddenly come to life and attack the heroes. It's simply a statue made of stone, its hands in its lap, its wings folded behind it. If the heroes spend any amount of time studying the gargoyle, they notice this:

Gray stone covers every bit of the gargoyle – even its eyes are carved from the material. Only one place has any kind of color. A blood-red gem fills a fist-sized cavity over its heart. The gem glows from an inner fire, perhaps the only source of warmth in this cold, iron cave.



WHAT DOES
THIS RED BUTTON DO?
— JAXOM, THE
THRICE-RESURRECTED
ROGUE



If the heroes try, the blood-red gem can easily be removed from the cavity. They may not know it yet, but they need the gem to get back. It's the gate-key that activates the iron arch.

If the heroes examine the gem, they can try to peer into its fiery center. This requires a successful saving throw vs. death magic, as it takes an exceptional force of will to stare into the miniature fire. A failure indicates that the fire is too bright, so that hero won't want to look again. A success allows the hero to see the source of the flame. It looks like the Lady of Pain icon, though a red sun burns where her face would normally be, and the bladed headdress appears as the sun's sharp rays.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: Should the heroes have trouble figuring out that the gem is the key home, use the following clue. Whenever a hero steps through the arch without the gem, let the other heroes make Wisdom checks with -3 penalties. Any heroes who succeed at the check notice that the gem flares brightly whenever a hero steps through the arch. This should make them suspect some kind of connection between the arch and the gem.

Also, if the heroes use the key to return before they have retrieved the ledger, Estavan is still in the hallway waiting for them. He points out that the key to the portal must be the gargoyle icon, which is also on his ledger. Perhaps his ledger is on the other side of the portal? Perhaps the characters should check it out since they already have the keys. . . .

3. IRON GOLEMS

As the heroes approach this pile of junk, it first appears to be a hill of dead bodies in the dim light. If they draw closer, they see what the bodies really are. Read the following:

They're bodies, all right, but not human bodies. Oh, the shapes are human, but the flesh is iron – as are the clothes, weapons, and armor they wear. Many of the bodies have merged into a single piece of ironlike stone, but a few remain independent. These are two dwarflike forms and one giant. All appear to be warriors, with weapons and armor of iron to match. They remind you of iron golems, just waiting for the command to rise up and animate.

These are indeed iron golems, though of a smaller and different variety. The magical spark that once animated them has long been dormant. Should they be struck by magical fire, however, they would be repaired (regaining 1 hp per Hit Die of damage inflicted). If the iron golems are activated (say, by an accidental discharge from the flying ship described below), they resume fighting the war they were created to wage long ago. 'Course, the heroes take the roles of their enemies should this occur.

IRON GOLEMS (3): AC 3; MV 6; HD 9; hp 1 per Hit Die of magical fire damage inflicted; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2d10; SD +1 weapon or better to hit; SZ M (6'–7' tall); ML fearless (19); Int non (0); XP 2,000.

4. FLYING SHIP

A strange craft rests atop a mountain of petrified scrap. Unlike most of the discarded items that have made their way here, the craft is still in working order. It was simply lost or misplaced. If the heroes examine the craft, read the following:

The thing sitting atop the scrap heap looks like a carriage of some sort, with an enclosed seat and a frame of thin glass and metal. Instead of wheels, the thing has a series of metal wings that jut from the carriage at various intervals. Attached to the bottom set of wings are long, thin cylinders that look like wands or rods of some sort. In all, the craft has a very disconcerting aura about it; it just doesn't seem natural.

The *flying ship* has enough power in it for some combination of flight and weapon use equal to 10 rounds. If it does nothing but fly, it can stay aloft and maneuver for the full 10 rounds. Each use of the weapons reduces the energy level by

one round. The ship has a maneuverability class A and an aerial speed of 50 feet per round. (A fully functional craft of this type is much faster.) The two weapons on each wing have a linked fire control (all of the wands fire at the same time) and cause area effect damage not unlike a *fireball* spell. It targets everything in a 20-foot radius, inflicting 2d6 points of damage to each victim (a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon reduces this to half damage). If the wands are removed from the wings or the craft's energy store is depleted, the weapons won't function.

To operate the craft, a hero must crawl into one of the carriage's two seats. The controls are unlike anything the heroes have ever seen, but trial and error — and a successful Intelligence check with a -6 penalty — allows one of them to figure out the basic



operation controls for flying, turning, and firing the weapons. Once the 10 rounds of energy have been used up, the craft crashes to the ground.

If the heroes don't find or use the craft, Jerkot's thugs might. Roll percentage dice every turn the heroes spend in the junkyard until the thugs are defeated. On a roll of 15% or less, one thug finds and figures out how to use the craft, then employing it in the battle against the heroes! Remember that a stray shot could hit the iron golems (location 3) and activate them.

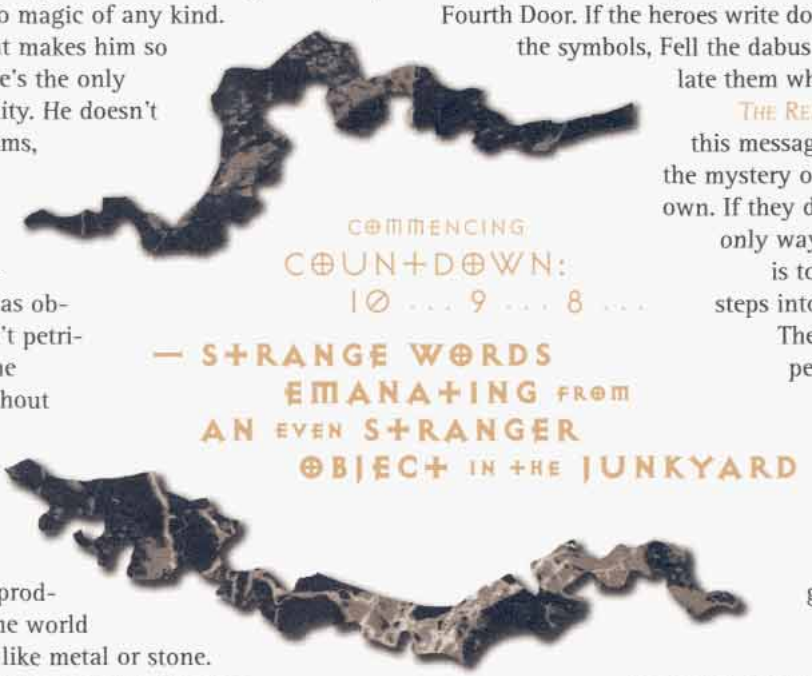
5. PETRIFIED THUG

At some point the heroes should come across one of Jerkot's thugs. The poor sod has succumbed to the magic of the plane and been petrified. He now appears as a remarkably lifelike statue made of ironlike stone. The heroes find him locked in place, reaching for a pile of unusual tools. The tools are made from what appears to be a living substance, like coral. They radiate no magic of any kind.

As for the thug, what makes him so unusual is the fact that he's the only petrified item in his vicinity. He doesn't have the look of older items, where their basic shape is starting to break down and be subsumed into the emerging mountain. Plus, the items he was obviously reaching for aren't petrified. This suggests that the process overtook him without affecting the living tools. His manner of dress and overall appearance mark him as a Cager.

The living tools are products of some twisted prime world where life can be shaped like metal or stone. A few items have an apparent purpose. One is a blade that attaches itself to a character's forearm when touched. It inflicts 1d8 points of damage per hit if used as a weapon. Another is a four-taloned claw attached to a tendrillike rope. When tossed toward a surface, the claws close and grasp. The rope extends to a length of 30 feet. The rest of the items serve no apparent function, though they gladly attach themselves to the heroes should the heroes get too close or handle them. One crawls onto a hero's face, another spreads over his body and forms a hard yet flexible shell (AC 3), and still another connects to a character's arm, penetrates the skin, and releases a spray of liquid that heals 1d8 points of damage.

All of these living tools are near death, for they haven't been fed or watered in a long time. As the heroes have no idea what the tools eat and drink, the tools die over the course of this adventure. Every round, roll 1d10. On a roll of 1, a tool dies. In any case, all the living tools die by the time one full day has passed.



6. THE MYSTERIOUS STAFF

One mountain of junk rises almost to the top of the cube's distant ceiling. The junk that comprises the heap has been worn to such a degree that the ironlike stone is entirely smooth and featureless. Two great mysteries surround this mountain. First, a message is written on the mountainside in dabus picture-symbols. Second, a staff is imbedded in the iron stone at the mountain's summit.

When the heroes look at the symbols, show them the diagram of Dabus Message 1 on the front-cover flap. The message says: "Bow to the right; bow to the left. The first key turns; the last door bends."

This may not mean much to the heroes now, but it's the first part of a three-part key that can be used to open the Fourth Door. If the heroes write down or otherwise memorize the symbols, Fell the dabus might be willing to translate them when they return to Sigil.

THE REAL CHANT: The heroes need this message if they're going to solve the mystery of the Fourth Door on their own. If they don't find the message, the only way through the Fourth Door is to follow Lathuraz when he steps into the portal.

The staff isn't affected by the petrification, but it is locked firmly into the summit of the junk mountain. Nothing the heroes do can help them remove it, and they can't even get a good look at it unless they have some means for reaching the top of the mountain. Climbing checks receive a –50% penalty due to the smoothness of the stone. If they do reach the top, read the following:

The staff juts out of the ironlike stone, its top about seven feet higher than the summit. It's an ornate staff of some unusual bluish metal. Blades radiate along the staff's shaft, jutting out in patterns similar to those decorating the headdress of the Lady of Pain. A hand sits atop the shaft, palm up, its long, delicate fingers wrapped around a perfectly round, perfectly smooth sphere of deep-blue stone.

If the heroes touch the staff, the deep-blue stone reacts. A storm of energy dances up from its dark interior, and spiky protrusions rise and fall along its surface. The hero who touched the staff receives a devastating shock that in-

flicts 4d8 points of electrical damage. (A successful saving throw vs. staff reduces this to half damage.)

The staff is a mystery that's beyond the scope of this adventure. Further details, if revealed at all, are left to future PLANESCAPE products.

7. THE PILE OF WEAPONS

What luck! The heroes discover a pile of discarded weapons that have only partially succumbed to the magic of this plane. This pile includes a number of mundane metal weapons such as swords, knives, and axes of various types. There are also three magical weapons: a *long sword +2*, a *broad sword +3*, and a *halberd +2*. A *detect magic* spell is required to distinguish these weapons from the mundane ones.

Unfortunately, a trio of rust monsters has decided to make a meal of these weapons. The heroes must defeat or chase off the rust monsters before they can safely loot the items. While the heroes aren't in any real danger from the rust monsters, any metal items and equipment they're carrying are.

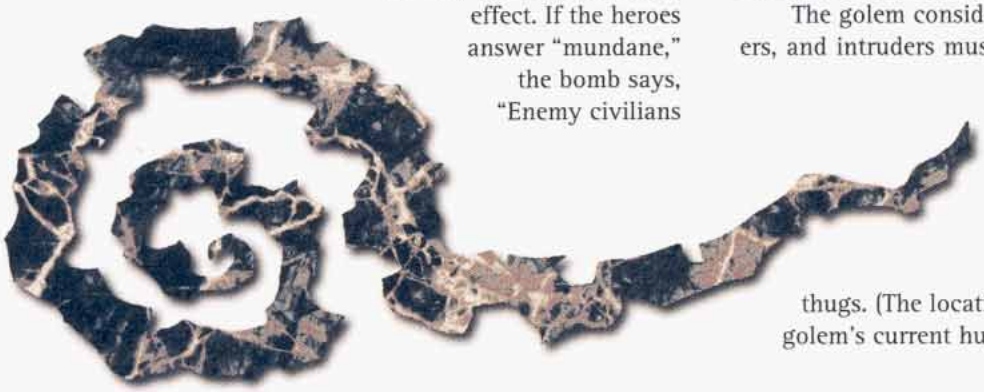
RUST MONSTER (3): AC 2; MV 18; HD 5; hp 27, 18, 15; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg nil; SA rust metal; SZ M (5′ long); ML average (9); Int animal (1); XP 270.

8. FIREBALL BOMB

The wizards of some prime-material worlds participate in wars of varying magnitude. Some have been fighting for so long that they've developed new and frightening weaponry. That's the case with the fireball bomb the heroes find jutting from a scrap pile. Read the following:

You notice a sparkling object among the heap of scrap nearby. On closer inspection, you see that the object is a long, lozenge-shaped case with a jewel-encrusted metal exterior. When you step closer, a mouth appears on the exterior surface and a voice asks, "Are you mundane or wizard?"

The fireball bomb was designed to destroy the enemy. On its trip toward enemy territory, something went wrong, and it wound up here. It has lain dormant, waiting to detect life so that it could accomplish its sole purpose – to explode grandly and to devastating effect. If the heroes answer "mundane," the bomb says, "Enemy civilians targeted, commencing countdown: 10 . . . 9. . . ." If the heroes reply "wizard," the bomb responds, "Enemy mage targeted, commencing countdown: 5 . . . 4. . . ." Either way, the clock's ticking. (If the heroes do not answer at all, the machine just continues to repeat its question as long as they remain nearby.)



Every round, the bomb calls out another number. When it reaches 0, the bomb explodes. The heroes can either run or try to disarm the bomb. A thief (with a successful open locks check) or wizard (with a *knock* spell) can expose the bomb's inner workings. A combination of spell components, crystals, and wires fill the case. A wizard can attempt an Intelligence check with a –3 penalty to notice that the wires correspond to the somatic components of a *fireball* spell. Then, each round he can make an Intelligence check with a –2 penalty to disconnect a wire. A failure could set the bomb off early. (Roll 1d10; on a roll of 9 or 10, the bomb explodes.) Three correct wires must be removed to stop the bomb. (If a thief tries to disarm the bomb, the Intelligence check receives a –4 penalty. Any other character class receives a –6 penalty.)

When the bomb explodes, it inflicts 10d10 points of damage to targets in the immediate area. This damage radiates outward, reducing to 8d10 one round away, 6d10 two rounds away, and so on down to 2d10 at four rounds away. Any heroes who ran for more than four rounds escape the blast and receive no damage.

9. GEARWORK GUARDIAN

One of the ancient weapons of war that has been abandoned to the gargoyle's junkyard is a gearwork golem. This creation was designed to protect a specific location on some distant prime or planar realm. It has forgotten all but the basics of its original orders, and even some of its primary functions have worn down over time. Still, it has avoided falling to the petrifying effects of the plane's magic, and it continues to guard what it considers to be land in its care (the junkyard).

The gearwork golem looks like a large, boxy humanoid with hinged limbs, metallic flesh held together with rivets, and exposed inner workings that show turning gears and whirling cogs. The golem is slow, but also very strong. It wields a huge pike that it recovered from somewhere within the junkyard. The pike has a slight enchantment, making it function as a +1 weapon.

The golem considers all living humanoids to be intruders, and intruders must be eliminated. It sets about its task with mechanical precision and an unwavering attitude. It doesn't speak or communicate in any way save through combat. It fights until destroyed or somehow incapacitated. When the golem encounters the heroes, it's busy hunting for Jerkot's thugs. (The location marked on the map represents the golem's current hunting ground.)

I BELIEVE!
AOSKAR,
I WILL SERVE YOU!

— SECOND AND FINAL MISTAKE
MADE BY NILOC
THE YOUTHFUL HALF-ELF

ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

After a panicked wave of people passes by, the Hardheads target the heroes. A group of Hardhead bashers consisting of twice as many members as the group of heroes steps forward, and one of them orders the heroes to surrender. The Hardheads' intent is obvious – they plan to arrest and shackle the heroes!

If a hero aided Fell, he received a gift that can help in this situation. Fell provided either a key to open the shackles after the heroes have been arrested or an Athar faction symbol the heroes can use to talk their way out of this jam. (Good role-playing counts in this situation, too!) How does the Athar faction symbol help? Well, these bashers have been ordered to cooperate with the Athar to disperse the crowd at the Shattered Temple and arrest the dwarf who instigated the whole affair. So, if the heroes pretend to be part of the Athar faction and make a good show of it, the Hardheads move on and find someone else to arrest.

If the heroes didn't help Fell and don't have either of his gifts, the bashers move forward and place them under arrest. If the heroes cooperate, the bashers shackle their hands with manacles and chains, attaching the end of the chains to metal rings in the street. (If the heroes ever noticed the rings before, they probably didn't give them a second thought. From now on, they'll realize what they're for.) The heroes are then held overnight in the prison and released with a warning. If the heroes resist, the bashers wade in swinging their heavy clubs.

The bashers are only doing their job. Killing them, especially when they're not using lethal force, is poor form on the part of the heroes.

BASHERS (PL/♂ HUMAN/F2/HARMONIUM/LG): THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club); AC 8; hp 12; MV 12; SZ M (6′ tall); ML steady (12); Int avg (9).

MIGHT AS WELL JUMP

This scene concludes with Garmundi's amazing disappearance. The heroes witness this last event either from the spot where they've been shackled or the place they ran to once they escaped from the Hardheads. Read the following:

The dwarf preacher spots a gang of Hardheads closing on him and nimbly leaps to another pillar. This one hangs precariously over a huge crack in the temple's foundation. You can't tell from this angle, but the crack appears to be extremely deep.

"The Four Doors return!" the dwarf proclaims. With that, he jumps into the gaping hole. The crowd gasps, and the Harmonium bashers reach the edge of the jagged crack.

"What addle-coved nonsense is this?" one of the bashers grumbles, peering into the pit. "He gave us the laugh," another says angrily, turning to scan the crowd.

"Find him!" the elf in Athar robes shouts. "That dwarf has broken the laws of Sigil and the Lady!"

This is probably a good time for the heroes to get out of there (if they can). If they have a map from Fell, they can easily find a path through the winding streets. Otherwise, they might get a little lost before finding their way to a safer neighborhood.

Continue with the DM's usual campaign storyline until the heroes decide to follow up one of the leads from this prologue (most likely the calling card that leads to the first adventure) or the Athar or Will of the One seeks them out to perform a service (which starts the second adventure).

AWARDS

If the heroes listen to the entire sermon, they receive 300 XP each.

If any heroes helped or tried to help Fell, give those heroes 150 XP each.

If any heroes helped or tried to help the halfling, give those heroes 150 XP each. However, they are penalized –50 XP each if they witnessed and then ignored the halfling's plight.

For helping the youth, give each participating hero 150 XP.

For killing the Mercykiller, each participating hero is penalized –100 XP.

Any hero who kills a Harmonium basher is penalized –200 XP.

The Second Door: The Forgotten Vault

This adventure is designed for four to six player character heroes of 4th to 6th level. It takes place about two weeks after the incidents portrayed in the "Prologue" and "The First Door: The Thuldanin Gargoyle." (The time frame can be longer if the DM needs it to be, just so long as there's time to complete all four adventures in a period of about two months.) It is suggested that this adventure be second in the series, but it can be used first or third if the timeline is adjusted and the encounters reorganized for a different level of experience. In the Prologue, the heroes watched Garmundi the street preacher leap into a deep hole and disappear. In this adventure, they leap into the same hole in an attempt to retrieve him. Why? They do it for one of three reasons: The Athar hire them to retrieve Garmundi, Origax and the Will of the One hire them to find Garmundi so they can put him in a safehouse, or the heroes decide to explore the Second Door to satisfy their own sense of adventure.

If the heroes decide to research the Four Doors of their own accord, let that play out. The DM should only resort to having an interested party hire the heroes if it's needed to bring them back to the storyline. They can go about researching the Four Doors in any number of ways.

It's okay to be nervous if an ogre mage smiles at you, but don't let him know you're nervous.

— Kylie the Tout, on dealing with Estavan the Merchant Lord

Researching the Four Doors

The heroes can dig up information on the Four Doors from a variety of sources, though they won't be able to learn all that much in the end. Still, some information is better than nothing, and even the slightest clue can spur them to further action. The extent of what the heroes should be able to learn at this point in time follows. The heroes should get some of the information from one source and the rest from another, just so they feel like they earned it.

Possible sources for this information include Balthazar Thames (who's recuperating at the Healing Hovel), Lissandra the Gate-Seeker (who wants to receive information concerning other portals in return), Fell the dabus (who might reluctantly pass on some information, although he presents it in the form of picture-symbols), and the Guvner's library.

The Locations of the Doors

The portals referred to as the Four Doors (a body can actually hear the capital letters) always appear at these locations: the upper level of #8 Gray Dragon Lane, in the Clerk's Ward; the catacombs beneath the Shattered Temple, accessed through a crack in the foundation; the corner of Wharf and Bizarre, in the Market Ward; and a tower at the end of Lady's Row, in The Lady's Ward.

THE DURATION OF THE BLINK CYCLE

The blink cycle associated with the Four Doors occurs every 500 years and lasts for two months. During that time only, the Four Doors can be accessed – if a cutter has the appropriate gate keys.

THE GATE KEYS

The heroes can learn the following information about the gate keys needed to access the Four Doors. Remember, the *warp sense* spell doesn't work on these blinks, so instead they have to rely on the research of others.

Thames and Lissandra have figured out that the key to the door in the Clerk's Ward is the icon of the grim gargoyle. Fell knows that the key to the door beneath the Shattered Temple is the holy symbol of Aoskar, though the Athar have merely narrowed their list down to three possible items: the words "The Four Doors return," Aoskar's holy symbol (which was tattooed on Garmundi's forehead), or a belly full of fermented portal ooze (Garmundi's favorite drink). If the Athar hire the heroes, they insist that the heroes test each theory before committing the entire group to entering the portal.

The door in the Market Ward is more difficult to pin down. None of the primary experts that the heroes have access to have figured it out completely, though Lissandra has a few details. She knows that the key isn't a physical item, but an intangible concept. Fell, if asked, projects a picture-symbol that means "show no fear." A hero that makes a successful Intelligence check with a –6 penalty when consulting the texts in the Guvner's library locates a reliable tome on the subject of this door. This tome, written by the chronicler Triand during the time of the blink cycle 1,000 years ago, includes this clue-filled entry:

"Concerning the mysterious Market Ward Door, I have this suggestion. To enter the world beyond, one must swallow one's fear just as the portal swallows one whole. To know even a moment's fear is to feed the beast. To be fearless and brave is to pass through unharmed."

Finally, no matter how hard they search or who they seek knowledge from, the heroes can't discover the secret to the gate key of the door in The Lady's Ward. Only the mercurial has ever used this door (at least as far as everyone knows). The only way for the heroes to figure out the key is by collecting the dabus-symbol clues provided on the other side of the first three doors, but gathering these clues requires that the heroes participate in the first three adventures.

ON THE TRAIL OF THE SECOND DOOR

The heroes get involved in the mystery of the Second Door in one of three ways: by being pressed into service by the Athar, by being hired by Origax and the Will of the One, or due to their own curiosity surrounding Garmundi's disappearance. As the method of the heroes' involvement determines how some parts of this adventure play out, here are the basic setups for each.

AGENTS OF THE ATHAR

Coranthol, a prime elf who's worked his way up the Athar ladder of influence, has been put in charge of the situation involving Garmundi the street preacher. He has a small army of Athar bloods and Harmonium bashers at his beck and call. The elf started out ordering Athar agents into the hole, but after the first three fell to their deaths, he decided to be more cautious. Research has been conducted, and the gate key has been narrowed to three possibilities (see above). Coranthol is reluctant to test these keys at the expense of more of his servants. That's what cutters like the heroes are for.

As the second week of the current blink cycle comes to an end, Coranthol is ready to try a new approach. He's ready to employ independent talent to handle this ride.

If there's an Athar faction member in the party or if the heroes have rendered service to the Lost in the past, that could be why Coranthol approaches them. If the heroes completed the adventure of the First Door, Coranthol undoubtedly hears about their exploits and seeks their help. A prominent Harmonium investigator who's lending a hand to the Athar could also bring the heroes in.

However it occurs, if the Athar or their associates seek out the heroes, they do so in a way that doesn't really leave the heroes any choice. Yes, the heroes will be paid for their help (100 gp per day per hero, plus 1,000 gp each for the return of Garmundi), but they should get the impression that they can't refuse the job. To refuse to help in a matter that concerns Sigil, its laws, and the Lady of Pain could cause the Harmonium to hound the heroes for years to come. The heroes are better off agreeing to take the job and figuring out how to get out of it later (if that's their intention).

Coranthol's expectations are simple. He wants the heroes to figure out the proper gate key (he even gives them the list of possibilities the Athar have narrowed it down to), enter the portal, locate Garmundi, and bring the dwarf to him at the faction's Shattered Temple headquarters. He wants the dwarf alive, but he'll settle for Garmundi's cold, lifeless body if necessary.

If the heroes agree to assist the Athar, they must contend with Signer cutters who want to retrieve Garmundi for their own purposes. These Signers promote the tenets of the Will of the One, and they'll do almost anything to keep Garmundi out of the hands of the Lost — including ambushing the heroes before they enter the Second Door or trying to grab Garmundi when the heroes return to the Cage.

Signer Cutters (4) (Pl/Var Var/F4/Sign of One/LN): AC 6 (studded leather); MV 12; hp 32, 27, 24, 19; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (long sword); SA +1 Strength bonus to damage rolls; SZ M (6′ tall); ML steady (12); Int avg (9); XP 175.

Signer Spellslingers (2) (Pl/Var Var/M4/Sign of One/LN): AC 4 (*bracers AC 4*); MV 12; hp 14, 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (*dagger +1*); SA/SD spells; SZ M (6′ tall); ML steady (12); Int high (14); XP 420.

Spells: (3/2) 1st — *burning hands, friends, magic missile*; 2nd — *mirror image, web.*

Working for the Will of the One

Origax the wizard is an influential and wealthy Cager who's known around town as the next best thing to a high-up. His tower rises above Rook Street in the Clerk's Ward, not far from the Hall of Speakers, faction headquarters for the Sign of One. As a member of the Signer sect the Will of the One, Origax is very interested in Garmundi's fate. He believes that the dwarf is destined to play a significant part in the sect's primary goal — the revival of the dead god Aoskar.

If the heroes haven't done anything to make the Will of the One fearful of their intentions, they'll be invited to Origax's tower for drinks. The invitation asks that they arrive at two lanterns on the fifth night of the second week of the blink cycle. (Starting at full dark, the city watch lights one lantern every hour. Two lanterns refers to the second hour after full dark.)

A tout delivers the invitation wherever the heroes normally bang around. The invitation, hand-written in delicate script on fine vellum, reads:

"Brave cutters. The honor of your presence is requested by the wizard Origax. Regale the wizard with tales of your adventures while enjoying food and drink in his tower home. In addition to good company, your time will be well compensated. Tonight. Two lanterns. Rook Street. Clerk's Ward. Signed, Origax of Sigil.

Origax's tower is protected by various enchantments, including a series of powerful spells that direct guests to the front door while hiding it from those of evil or harmful intent. The heroes can't help but walk right up to it if they so much as step onto Rook Street after receiving the invitation.

Inside, Origax and a few other well-to-do members of the Will of the One warmly greet the heroes. After drinks are served and a few tales are shared, Origax gets down to business. Read the following:

"You appear to be cutters of the highest caliber," the ancient wizard notes, tipping his mug in your direction. "I sometimes hire groups like yours to perform various tasks, both in the Cage and elsewhere." His gaze drifts over each of you in turn as he resumes. "Would you be interested in retrieving something that was lost? I promise you, I pay well for honest work."

If the heroes refuse or ask to know more before agreeing, Origax stands, thanks them for their time, and tosses them a sack of coins worth 500 gp. "You must understand that I can't divulge information to those who aren't intimately involved," he says with obvious regret. "I believe you can find your own way out."

If the heroes agree to help, Origax outlines what he wants them to do. Read the following:

"You must follow Garmundi the street preacher through the intermittent portal located in the Shattered Temple. Find the dwarf wherever he might have wandered to, secure him – but don't hurt him – and bring him back here. Garmundi is in terrible danger, but I can protect him once he's safely in my hands. Accomplish this task, and I shall reward each of you with 1,000 pieces of platinum. Fail and. . . . Well, please don't fail."

Once all of the details are worked out, Origax reveals the nature of the necessary gate key. "To pass through the intermittent portal, you must carry the ancient holy symbol of Aoskar," he explains. "Any depiction of this symbol will do, but be aware that possession of such an item can result in your arrest and execution." If the heroes ask where they can get one, Origax directs them to Fell's tattoo shop.

If the heroes decide to work for Origax, then agents loyal to the Athar try to take Garmundi away from them when they return through the Second Door. Use the statistics for the Signer cutters and spellslingers presented above, changing only the faction affiliation.

THE REAL CHANT: If the heroes approach the dabus and explain that they're working for the Will of the One, Fell provides a tattoo of Aoskar's holy symbol. (The symbol is shown on the front-cover flap.) Where Fell places this tattoo is up to the heroes. If a hero agrees to receive the tattoo on his body, the DM must remember that displaying the symbol in Sigil is against the laws of the Lady and could result in a lot of trouble later on. Receiving the symbol as a real object is fine, but it fades away after 1d4+4 turns (50–80 minutes). The best bet is for the heroes to ask Fell to place the tattoo on a smooth object (like a shield or a weapon blade).

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

If the heroes decide to snub both the Lost and the Signers, they might seek out Garmundi in order to satisfy their own curiosity. (In a pinch, they could even accept another job from Estavan.) In this case, they need to discover the gate key on their own and decide what to do with the dwarf after they find him. Of course, they also have to contend with agents working for the Athar and the Sign of One – agents that are desperately trying to recover the street preacher for their own factions.

AN ACT OF TERRORISM

Sometime before the heroes enter the Second Door, they witness an act of terrorism being committed by the fanatics of the Society of the Locked Door. This encounter can take place anywhere, including on the way from meetings with the Athar or Origax, while engaged in research, or on the way to Fell's shop.

The Society of the Locked Door has decided to step up its level of activity. On this particular day, the fanatics plan to destroy a portal. It doesn't matter which portal, as long as it's one on a main thoroughfare so that they can take credit for their work. (Being fanatics, the members of the society don't see the problem with destroying property that belongs to the Lady of Pain.) Read or paraphrase the following:



You notice four suspicious-looking berks emerging from an alley across the street. They're dressed alike, wearing black bandannas across the lower halves of their faces, black caps and gloves, and tight black outfits. They look around without spotting you and rush into the street. They're all carrying tools of one sort or another. Two have sledge hammers and crowbars. One carries a bucket of paint and a large brush. Another holds a sword in one hand, a dagger in the other, and has a large sack slung across his back.

They quickly make their way to a door in the wall of a large building. The weapon-carrying cutter takes up a protective stance, scanning both directions for danger. The painter starts applying paint to the wall beside the door. The two larger berks prepare to attack the door frame with their hammers and crowbars.



If the heroes watch for a few moments, they can read the painter's message. It says: "Locked forever — SLD." Any planar hero who decides to check can determine that the door in question is a portal.

The heroes can try to stop the fanatics, watch to see what happens, or simply go on with their own business.

If the heroes intercede, they can get to the fanatics before the portal is badly damaged. Each fanatic has a weapon, and they fight until two of their number go down. The other two then split up and start running. At any point, the fanatic with the sack might drop (or hand out) a leaflet proclaiming the doctrine of the Society of the Locked Door. (See the back-cover flap.) Statistics for these fanatics are given in "Encounter: Blade and Leaflet" in the previous chapter.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If the heroes don't get involved, a group of dabus arrives to stop the fanatics before they cause too much damage. Almost immediately, a group of Harmonium bashers shows up to arrest the perpetrators. Later, the heroes might spot dabus painting over the message and repairing the door frame.

✦ THE SECOND DOOR ✦

The Second Door was once a normal portal in the catacombs beneath Aoskar's Temple, but when the holy place became the Shattered Temple, it was trapped under tons of rubble. During the first blink cycle, however, the foundation of the temple cracked open, and access was once again granted to the Second Door.

Today, the portal can only be entered through the deep crack. Those carrying the proper gate key (or leaping right behind a key holder) fall not to their deaths upon the sharp, jagged rocks below, but to Pandemonium, in the layer of Agathion. 'Course, those without the right key splatter on the rocks and suffer a multiverse of hurt.

Due to the great fall and sharp rocks, jumping into the crack without the proper key results in 6d6 points of damage. Each character can attempt a Dexterity check at –4 to cut the damage in half (indicating that the character was able to avoid falling directly onto the glasslike shards of rock below).

Now, the characters can use a rope when trying to determine what the proper key is, but they won't all be able to lower themselves into it before it closes. Once it opens, they'll have to jump.

When the portal is activated, those falling in the hole immediately find themselves swept up in a gray cloud of swirling wind. The next moment, they step into an isolated cavity in the endless rock of Agathion.

The cavity is huge, but it's a cage just the same. Stale but breathable air fills the great cavern, although every inch of wall, floor, and ceiling is solid rock. There aren't any cracks, tunnels, or openings of any sort leading out of the cavern. Inside the cavern, there're no fungi, insects, or living creatures of any kind — except for the beings that have been trapped here. There's not even any light, so the heroes have to provide their own if they don't want to stumble around in the dark.

Refer to the map on the inside of the cover when running this portion of the adventure.

DM NOTES: While the heroes explore this isolated cavity in the endless rock, there are a few conditions of the plane to keep in mind.

- LIGHT: There isn't any. It's completely and utterly dark throughout this huge cavern. If the heroes decide not to use a light source, all of the penalties associated with darkness are in effect (see the *DMG*, Chapters 13 and 14). This includes a slower safe movement rate (1/3 the normal amount) and a 4-point penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, and Armor Classes (to a maximum AC of 10). If torches or lanterns are used, there's a 10% chance (a roll of 1 on 1d10) every turn that the flame consumes all of the stale air in the area. In this case, the light source sputters out, darkness reclaims the area, and all heroes within 15 feet of the flame must make a Constitution check with a –2 penalty to remain conscious once the air is consumed. A failed check causes the hero to fall unconscious for 1d4+1 rounds. The air in this cavity is replaced, but it's a slow process. Magical light sources aren't affected. Infravision doesn't work well because the stone walls absorb all heat.
- GRAVITY: It's oriented toward whatever surface a body's closest to — floor, wall, or ceiling. Cutters who aren't used to omni-directional gravity receive an additional penalty of –2 to attack and damage rolls until they grow accustomed to its effects. At the start of each encounter, heroes make saving throws vs. paralyzation to determine if they've gotten used to the strange gravity. A failure indicates that the penalty remains; the hero can make another check at the start of the next encounter. A success indicates that the hero can act without the gravity penalty.

- Noise: Though the heroes can't "hear" the wind of Pandemonium with their ears, they can definitely feel it. The stone walls and floor vibrate with a constant, perceivable rumble that can be as maddening as the blowing wind on the plane's other layers. Have each hero make a saving throw vs. paralyzation at the start of encounters 2, 5, 7, and 8 to see if the madness affects them. If a hero fails a saving throw, he progresses to the first stage of wind madness. Each failure increases the level of the madness in the following sequence:

Frustration – Characterized by impatience, irritability, and a desire to move on. Frustrated cutters receive a –1 penalty to their Wisdom and Intelligence.

Despair – Hopelessness sets in, and these cutters follow the group in an apathetic manner. In battle, however, they fight like berserkers, showing that they're ready to break from the strain. Despairing bashers are automatically surprised in combat, but they receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls.

Hysteria – Cutters suffering from the third stage of wind madness want to escape the constant noise. (In some ways, a noise that's felt in the bones instead of heard by the ears is even worse.) Immediately upon failing the third saving throw, a cutter runs madly in random directions, screaming for the noise to leave him alone. He covers his ears and closes his eyes, refusing to do anything useful.

Resignation – A cutter reaching this stage suffers from some phobia or mania that relates to the cutter's personality.

Once the heroes leave Pandemonium, the symptoms vanish. However, if they ever return, so does the madness, picking up at the last stage of manifestation.

WHO INHABITS THE VAULT?

Three major figures inhabit this forgotten cavity in the endless rock of Agathion. The creature imprisoned here the longest is Argathorn, a black dragon who once served as a proxy to Chronepsis, the draconic god of fate, death, and judgment. Why Chronepsis banished Argathorn to this forsaken location remains a mystery. The black dragon, however, has succumbed to the madness of this plane. Still, he freely passes along his visions of the future, even if these visions are unwanted. Chronepsis placed a small army of baneguard in this cavern to make sure Argathorn doesn't escape.

Zarulaz the mercurial has been a resident of this place since he and his brother Lathuraz were rendered helpless a few thousand years ago. In his weakened state, Zarulaz can neither help nor hinder the heroes. He can relate his story to the heroes, however.

The last inhabitant has also been trapped in this cavern for a thousand years. A retriever was sent by an unnamed Abyssal lord to recover the treasures beyond the Second Door. It has been weakened over the centuries, but it continues to carry out its mission to the best of its ability – even if that means destroying any heroes who get in its way. Garmundi the street preacher is in the retriever's clutches when the heroes arrive.

WHAT THE HEROES WANT

What do the heroes want from this region of Agathion? In almost all cases, they've probably come to find Garmundi the street-preaching dwarf. Garmundi has been taken captive by the retriever in the hopes that the dwarf can help send it back to the Abyss. As the heroes have also stepped through the portal, the retriever might seek them out for the same reason. (See location 9.)

The dabus message (the second part of the gate key for the Fourth Door) can be found inscribed upon a stone wall. Without a light source, however, the heroes won't be able to spot it. (See location 6.)

To activate the portal back to Sigil, the heroes might need to find another holy symbol of Aoskar. This is especially true if the one they received from Fell faded out of existence (as described above). A true holy symbol – perhaps one of the last from the time of the god's demise – can be found on a rock shelf near the dabus message. (See location 6.)

Finally, the *cloak of trapping* has been hidden in this forgotten vault for countless years. This magical item designed to bind mercurials is currently in the retriever's possession. (See location 9.)

1. ARRIVAL

The heroes begin this journey by leaping into a deep crack in the foundation of the Shattered Temple. They then find themselves stepping through a stone archway in a huge cavern. Read the following:

You find yourself emerging from a glowing portal in solid rock, stepping into a tunnel of natural stone. Once the portal closes, you're plunged into total darkness. You're dimly aware of a steady vibration in the cavern floor. The air is thick and stale, but otherwise, everything is silent and apparently deserted.

Give the players a moment to decide what their heroes are doing about the lack of light, the stale air, and the constant vibration. Then, proceed with the rest of this encounter. Bear in mind that if the heroes decide to stumble around in the dark, they wind up falling toward the stone walls as the gravity shifts. This can be disconcerting and even damaging. Any hero who falls toward a gravity base must make a successful Dexterity check with a –2 penalty to avoid being injured. A failed check results in 1d4 points of damage.

The first encounter the heroes have in this cavern could also be their last. Remember to adjust the descriptions based on the light source the heroes are using (if any). As they explore the first chamber and look for some sign of Garmundi, read or paraphrase:

You find a tattered strip of cloth caught on the spiky protrusions of the nearest rock wall. It might belong to the dwarf street preacher, or it might not. You hear the rattle and scrape of bone on bone, and then twisted skeletons of some humanoid race walk across the ceiling, moving in your direction.

These creatures are baneguard, a special type of skeleton animated to serve as guardian creatures. The caverns are filled with these monsters, whose sole purpose is to keep Argathorn the dragon from using the intermittent portal. 'Course, Argathorn has no intention of using the portal. He knows the fate of the multiverse, and he's content to wait and watch from this comfortably mad locale.

Six baneguard attack the heroes in this encounter. They battle until destroyed and then re-animate 1d6 turns later. These particular baneguard won't leave the first chamber. (There are others scattered throughout the cavern, though.) If the heroes simply make a run for it, the baneguard won't follow them. Baneguard have all the benefits and detriments of normal skeletons, plus the additional abilities listed below.



AH, LITTLE DEAD ONES, DON'T WORRY. MOST OF YOU DIE QUICKLY AND PAINLESSLY. . . .

— ARGATHORN THE BLACK DRAGON, SEER OF FUTURE EVENTS, TALKING TO THE HEROES IN AGATHION



BANEGUARD: AC 7; MV 12; HD 4+4; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA *magic missile* spell once every three rounds (creates two missiles that inflict 1d4+1 points of damage each); SD blink (as per the 3rd-level wizard spell) once per turn that lasts for four consecutive rounds; SZ M (5′–6′ tall); ML steady (11); Int avg (10); XP 975.

2. CAVE OF VISIONS

Argathorn has the ability to project his mad, chaotic visions throughout the many chambers of this cavern. These visions splatter upon the heroes like torrential rain storms, drenching them with memories and possible scenes of future events. In some cases, these visions are so powerful that they actually seem to transform the cavern into someplace else. When the heroes enter this chamber, one of these projected visions assaults them. Read or paraphrase the following:

The darkness suddenly explodes as a shower of light cascades down the chamber's far wall. As light splashes into the cracks and rocky corners, you see a tall, robed figure standing on the left wall. A shadowy hood and long, flowing sleeves hide the figure so thoroughly that you can't see any details of its face or form. Nevertheless, it shouts a compelling order into the recesses of your being.

"Save the dwarf!" the figure wails, and the tattooed face of Garmundi appears in the cascade of light. "A thing from the deepest pits in the Abyss has captured him, and the fate that awaits him is terrible to contemplate! Save the dwarf!" Then, as suddenly as it appeared, the light disappears, and darkness once again claims the chamber.

Argathorn wants the heroes to rescue Garmundi from the clutches of the retriever, since he cannot directly intervene (another condition of his imprisonment). Like Fargullen, the dwarf who visited this forgotten vault when the doors first blinked, Argathorn plans to prepare Garmundi to serve as a prophet for the dead god Aoskar. He can't accomplish this if the retriever kills the dwarf, however, so Argathorn has appealed to the heroes for assistance.

Have each hero who experiences this vision make a saving throw vs. death magic. A successful saving throw indicates that the hero can decide for himself how to react (or not react) to the vision. A failed saving throw indicates that the hero has a compelling desire to help Garmundi in whatever way possible. Treat this effect like a *friends* spell that lasts until the heroes leave this plane.

THE REAL CHANT: Argathorn knows something about the future that concerns Sigil, the Lady of Pain, Aoskar, and the entire multiverse. The dragon won't reveal too many secrets about this, as it's the topic that drove him mad and had him banished from his god's side in the first place. Until the heroes reach Argathorn's chamber (location 6), the only method through which the dragon communicates with them is a series of vision encounters described throughout this adventure.

DM NOTE: The heroes each need to make a madness check upon entering this chamber.

3. VISION CHURCH

This chamber has been invested with one of Argathorn's permanent visions. It's a memory, really, from a time when the dragon felt happy and content in the presence of his god. This memory embraces the heroes when they enter the chamber, bathing them in the good feelings associated with worship and dedication. Read or paraphrase the following:



You find yourself in a warm, comfortable place that seems as familiar to you as your own case. There's light everywhere, soft and radiant, and hourglasses – so many hourglasses. You hear voices joined in song drifting toward you from these hourglasses. The song wraps you in good feelings, even though you can't quite understand the words. The song fills you with the comfort of an endless cycle, a cycle as natural as the falling grains of sand all around you.

Any heroes who spend at least one turn in this chamber come away with a bonus. Because of the elation attached to this memory, 1d6+1 points of damage are permanently healed, and penalties associated with noise madness are negated while in this chamber.

4. CHAMBER OF EXTREME LONELINESS

When the heroes reach this chamber, madness overcomes Argathorn, and a terrible vision explodes around the heroes, drenching them in the utter loneliness. Read or paraphrase:

The land beneath you disappears into nothingness, leaving you floating in a great expanse of blackness. Your friends are gone. You're all alone in this dark realm. You're lonely and frightened, powerless to do anything except drown in the eternal night.

Have the heroes each make a saving throw vs. death magic to resist this vision. Those who fail their saving throws retain a portion of the loneliness that Argathorn experiences, reducing their Wisdom scores by 1 point. This is a permanent loss, barring the use of some kind of restorative magic. After experiencing the vision, the heroes can again perceive the cavern around them.

5. A HERO'S FATE

When the heroes enter this chamber, they must contend with two problems. First, six more baneguard wait for them here. Use the statistics provided in location 1. As the baneguard attack, this devastating vision washes over the heroes – a vision of each hero's eventual fate, as seen by Argathorn. Read or paraphrase the following:

The cavern fades, plunging you into a black nothingness that stretches in every direction. For long moments you simply drift silently, alone in this empty place. Then, you feel sensations throughout your body. You can't move, not so much as a little finger or an eyebrow, but you can feel . . . things . . . moving along your flesh. You feel great pain, as a thousand tiny creatures bite and dig into your skin. They're eating you alive! One emerges from the flesh beneath your eye, rising up before it plunges down again. It's a long, pale-colored worm, bloated on the meat of your body. You watch it for a few long, disturbing seconds, and then it chews a new tunnel into your cheek.

Any hero who makes a successful saving throw vs. death magic ignores the vision and fights without penalty. Those who fail the saving throw can't attack or defend themselves for 1d4+1 rounds as the vision plays out. The baneguard receive automatic hits against any heroes caught up in the vision.

DM NOTE: The heroes each need to make a madness check upon entering this chamber.

HE'S MAD
I TELL YOU, MAD!
YOU MUST STOP HIM,
OR ALL IS LOST!
— ZARULAZ, REVEALING THE DARK ABOUT HIS BROTHER LATHURAZ

6. ARGATHORN'S CHAMBER

The black dragon Argathorn, once a beloved proxy of the draconic god of fate and death, now resides in this chamber. If the heroes approach this chamber without light, Argathorn talks to them as a disembodied voice in the darkness. If they have a light source, it's still hard to see the dragon due to the blackness of his scales.

Argathorn isn't extremely large (as dragons go), but he fills most of this chamber. The black dragon's mood swings from extreme happiness to terrible depression in an instant, but he won't attack the heroes – or any other creature for that matter. Argathorn won't even defend himself. Damage inflicted against the dragon heals almost immediately, a condition of his imprisonment as set forth by Chronepsis.

If the heroes enter this chamber, Argathorn welcomes them to "Agathion, somewhere in the bowels of Pandemonium." If they haven't yet rescued Garmundi, he urges them to hurry. "I've seen the future, little dead ones," Argathorn moans. "I've seen it all." Except for dropping hints about how the heroes might eventually die or the return of the Gate Keeper, however, Argathorn never gives specifics about the future.

DM NOTE: If the heroes have a light source while in this chamber, they might spot some items they need. Any hero who makes a successful Wisdom check notices the dabus message inscribed in the stone wall. A successful Wisdom check at a –4 penalty also lets a hero spot the holy symbol of Aoskar that sits in a recessed shelf. If the heroes ask, Argathorn says they can have the symbol – after they rescue Garmundi.

When the heroes examine the inscription, show them Dabus Message 2 on the cover flap. It says: "Lift the left; lift the right. The leg extends, the second key lights."

The holy symbol is an ornate and richly jeweled version of the tattoo that Garmundi wears on his forehead. It looks like a great key with an open door for a pommel. Inside the door, glittering diamonds represent stars on a field of black velvet. The heroes can leave the holy symbol where it is, or they can take it with them when they leave (if they have rescued Garmundi).

Origax will pay 5,000 gp extra for the holy symbol. Fell will offer the heroes three good symbols for it. Garmundi says he isn't worthy to receive it, but if the heroes give it to him, he will smile and accept it serenely. 'Course, possessing the holy symbol is against the law in Sigil, and the Harmonium will act accordingly should they spot the item.

7. ZARULAZ'S CHAMBER

Zarulaz the mercurial lies in this chamber of rough stone. He has been here since his brother Lathuraz wounded him. Originally, the bloods who helped capture Lathuraz placed an apparently dying and comatose Zarulaz beyond the Second Door. In the centuries since, Zarulaz has regained consciousness, but he still retains the festering wounds of battle. Read or paraphrase:

Something stirs in the dark recesses of this chamber. It appears to be a humanoid form whose outer flesh has been peeled off. Great wounds fester across the body's chest, and you notice that it doesn't have any bones either. Then, it opens its eyes and says in a cracking voice, "Has my brother returned?"

If the heroes talk to Zarulaz, he can tell them everything from "An Introduction" concerning Lathuraz and the Four Doors. However, the mercurial is in great pain. Although he treats the heroes as lesser creatures, he displays

none of the contempt that Lathuraz has. Zarulaz can feel his brother's presence, even across the multiverse. He knows that his brother is up to something, so Zarulaz tries to recruit the heroes, as he recruited the Cager bloods so long ago. He tells them:

"Lathuraz, my brother, is a powerful and dangerous being. I helped stop him once, but I was greatly wounded in the battle. Now you must either take up the cause or stand by and watch this lesser reality become his personal toy. Hidden behind the Four Doors, there are four items that can be used to defeat Lathuraz: the rod of mercury *to find him, the* cloak of trapping *to bind him, the* manacles of lesser reality *to render him helpless, and the* sword of Lathuraz *to slay him."*

Healing magic won't help Zarulaz. If the heroes offer, he will return to Sigil with them. If he's going to die, Zarulaz wants to do so in his own reality. At this time, he won't reveal that he knows the key to the Fourth Door, but he can provide the means to open it should the heroes need help later on.

DM Note: The heroes each need to make a madness check upon entering this chamber.

8. The Retriever's Nest



The retriever has turned this large area into its nest. In the many centuries since it became trapped here, the retriever has become weak. It isn't helpless, but it is far from the terror it once was. For example, its cleaverlike forelimbs don't pack the punch they once did, and two of its magical eyes no longer function. The heroes must defeat the retriever to claim its treasure – the *cloak of trapping* and Garmundi the dwarf. The retriever, looking for a way to escape this place, fights to the death.

The *cloak of trapping* binds a mercurial in his current host. The mercurial can not leave that host or remove the cloak.

DM Note: The heroes each need to make a madness check upon entering this chamber.

Weakened Retriever: AC –2; MV 12; HD 8+8; hp 43; THAC0 13; #AT 4; Dmg 2d6/2d6/1d6/ 3d6; SA eye rays, one attack in a round when no physical attacks are used, eye must then recharge for 6 rounds, save vs. breath weapon for half damage (*cold ray*, one target, 30-yard range, 6d4+6 damage; *fireball ray*, 5′ blast radius, 30-yard range, 6d6 damage); SD fear (creatures of less than 4HD save vs. spell or flee for 2d6 rounds), regeneration (damage caused by nonmagical weapons heals at a rate of 1 hp per round); SZ H (12′ tall); ML fanatic (17); Int low (6); AL CE; XP 8,000.

Concluding This Adventure

Once the heroes have dealt with the retriever and released Garmundi, they need to decide what to do. Garmundi demands to know who they are; how the heroes answer determines the dwarf's behavior.

If the heroes say they're working for the Athar or the Harmonium, Garmundi leaps away. "What kind of cross-trade is this?" the dwarf demands. "I won't be put in the dead-book that easy! Tell the Lost that I gave you the laugh, or so help me I'll. . . ." Argathorn defends Garmundi in this situation and tells the heroes to return to Sigil on their own.

If the heroes say that Origax sent them, the dwarf considers this for a moment. "Origax, huh? He's with the Will of the One. Okay, I'll go back with you, but the first time I see one of the Lost or a Hardhead, I'm slipping the blinds!"

If the heroes admit that they came of their own accord, Garmundi thanks them for helping him escape. "I have work to do now, my friends," Garmundi tells them. He remains behind to learn from Argathorn, just like Fargullen so many centuries ago.

When the heroes carry the key through the stone archway, they find themselves in the Shattered Temple, over looking the hole that contains the Second Door. If they have returned with Garmundi, the heroes may still have to deal with the Signers or the Athar.

If the heroes return to Sigil with Zarulaz, the mercurial heads off on his own at the first opportunity to acquire a body and check on the current situation. He seeks out the heroes in the adventure of the Fourth Door. If they did not retrieve the *rod of mercury* the first time, Zarulaz advises them to go back and get it.

Awards

If the heroes research the Four Doors and learn anything important, they receive 500 XP each.

If they decide to seek out Garmundi on their own, give the heroes 1,000 XP each.

If they take on the job for Coranthol, they earn only 250 XP each, but if they decide to help Origax, they earn 500 XP each.

If the heroes try to stop the fanatics from destroying a portal, they earn 750 XP each.

If they agree to Zarulaz's charge and return the mercurial to Sigil, they receive 1,000 XP each.

If they rescue Garmundi, give them 2,000 XP each. If they let Garmundi determine his own fate, give them an additional 1,000 XP each.

If the heroes take possession of the *cloak of trapping*, award them 250 XP each.

The Third Door: Logicus Prime

This adventure is designed for a party of four to six player character heroes of 5th to 7th level. It takes place during the fourth week of the current blink cycle (or sooner if the heroes decide to deal with the Third Door at some earlier point). It's suggested that this be the third adventure used in the series, but it can be played at any time if the encounters are brought down a notch or two for lower-level characters.

Herein, the heroes either continue their investigation of the Four Doors for their own reasons, or they do so at the behest of Estavan the merchant lord. Estavan has a large stake in the events surrounding this particular door. He knows that Lathuraz the mercurial was imprisoned beyond this door, and he knows that the prison is breaking down. Estavan wants to destroy the creature during this blink cycle, instead of leaving it to wreak havoc at some future time.

Estavan's plan is simple. Send the heroes, along with one of his most trusted agents, through the Third Door. The agent sets the mercurial free, then the heroes follow it back to Sigil and eventually through the Fourth Door. According to all of the documents Estavan possesses, Lathuraz can only be destroyed in the realm beyond the door in The Lady's Ward.

✦ Business Lunch ✦

Around the beginning of the fourth week after the incidents at the Shattered Temple, the heroes get another invitation. The messenger is Kylie, the tout who gave them Balthazar Thames's calling card in the opening scene. She boldly strides into whatever establishment or kip the heroes are banging around and delivers her message. Read the following:

> *"Hey, cutters," the tiefling female calls as she enters the room, "I've got a message for you." She moves closer, lowering her voice so that only you can hear it. "Estavan wants you for lunch. Oops. I mean, the merchant lord would like you to join him for lunch. He has a business proposition to discuss. If you ask me, there's a lot of jink to be made on this ride."*

Kylie doesn't stick around long. She delivers the message, provides directions to Estavan's office if the heroes forgot where it is, winks seductively at one of the male cutters, and saunters out of the room in a way no one can ignore. If the heroes decide not to attend the lunch, Estavan sends another message. It might be necessary to remind the heroes that Estavan isn't someone they want to make mad. He's a much better friend than enemy.

SURE, I'LL BE LOGICUS PRIME. WHY NOT?

— ORGURR THE GREEN SLAAD, RESPONDING TO THE LOGICUS SERVERS

Eventually, the heroes should arrive at Estavan's office. A veritable feast has been set out in anticipation of their visit, and the merchant lord is all smiles. 'Course, a smiling ogre mage might make the heroes a bit nervous, but that's okay. It probably should. The lunch proceeds pleasantly enough, and the food's extremely good. The platters are filled with delicacies the heroes have never seen before – items that are rich, expensive, and wonderfully tasty. After some eating and small talk, Estavan gets down to business. He doesn't stop eating, but he does get a bit more serious. Read the following:

"Do you remember that dwarf street preacher and the doors he rattled his bone-box about?" Estavan asks as he spears a slab of astral whale roasted in garlic sauce. "Well, you did such a fine job retrieving my ledger that I'd like you to investigate one of the other intermittent portals. I'll provide you with what I know about the portal. Then it's up to you to secure the proper key and travel to wherever it leads. I want you to serve as guards and companions for one of my trade agents. With any luck, the portal leads to a place just ripe with goods I can acquire and sell elsewhere."

Estavan explains that the Third Door is located somewhere on the corner of Wharf and Bizarre in the Market Ward. "Seek out Lissandra or Fell for clues concerning the gate key," he tells them. "My agent, a capable basher named Caravan, will meet you in the Market Ward first thing in the morning. All of the details concerning trade negotiations and the acquiring of goods should be left to him." The heroes simply have to get Caravan through the portal and back again in one piece – at least that's what Estavan tells them. "For this simple task, I'll pay you 1,500 gp each," Estavan concludes. If the heroes press for more jink, he can be talked into 2,000 gp each, but no more.

THE REAL CHANT: Estavan has been waiting for the return of the portals so that he could finally set his plan in motion. Estavan wants to help Lathuraz escape so that the mercurial can return to his own reality – a reality where even the godlike mercurials can be slain. If the heroes allowed Zarulaz to return to Sigil from Agathion (see the Second Portal adventure), then Estavan and Zarulaz have met prior to the start of this adventure. In that situation, Estavan is even more anxious to see his plan through to fruition, as Zarulaz can sense his brother's seething hatred.

✦ ATTACKS IN THE NIGHT ✦

To discover the key to the Third Door, the heroes are going to have to do some digging. See "Researching the Four Doors" in the previous chapter for specifics on how the heroes can learn more about the doors.

Whichever expert the heroes decide to call upon winds up as a target for the Society of the Locked Door's latest act of terrorism. The fanatics have stepped up their insane campaign, seeking to add assassination to their repertoire of portal smashing and leaflet distribution. If the heroes decide to find a different source of information, the SLD targets that source. As night begins to overtake Sigil, the targeted expert calls upon the heroes for help. (In this case, the expert is worried about being followed and seeks out the heroes for protection.)

As the night progresses, the SLD makes three attempts to kill the intended target. It's up to the heroes to make sure that the fanatics fail.

THE FIRST ATTACK

The first attempt to kill the intended target involves a fhorge that's been set loose in the Cage. This mean-tempered creature is related to the wild boar, except it's as big as a bull and twice as strong. When a fhorge gets mad, it stays that way until it kills something with its tusks, or it is killed. (There's a saying that should be remembered: "A body's got to *really* kill a fhorge – maybe even twice. And then it'll probably still keep attacking.") The SLD slaps one of their leaflets on the fhorge's back and sets it loose in sight of the intended target.

Fhorge: AC 6 (head 3); MV 15; HD 5+5; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 1 and 1; Dmg 3d6 (tusks) and 1d3 (tail); SA charge (+2 bonus to attack roll, +3 damage; if the attack roll exceeds the required number by 4 or more, target must save vs. paralyzation or be knocked prone); SD +2 bonus to saves vs. mind-affecting or emotion-based spells, continues fighting until reduced to –10 hp; SZ M (5′ tall at shoulder); ML elite (14); Int semi (2–4); AL N; XP 1,400.

THE SECOND ATTACK

The second attempt to kill the portal expert involves fanatics with bows. An SLD leaflet is secured to each arrow that these assassins fire. Each assassin has three arrows, and when an assassin has fired all of his arrows, he flees into the night.

Fanatics with Bows (4) (Pl/Var Var/F6/CN): AC 6 (leather armor, Dexterity); MV 12; hp 39, 36, 33, 31; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (long bows with *+2 arrows*); SZ M (6′ tall); ML elite (13); XP 650.

THE THIRD ATTACK

The third and final attempt to assassinate the portal expert involves angry, frustrated fanatics with a variety of weapons. This hit squad is assembled and sent to deal with not only the intended target, but with "the cutters who don't know how to mind their own business and keep getting in the way of a perfectly fine assassination plot" (the heroes). There are six fanatics in the hit squad, 7th-level fighters – all with magical weapons and a desire to cause lots of damage. If four of the fanatics fall, the remaining two try to escape. They surrender if they can't get away.

Hit Squad Fanatics (6) (Pl/Var Var/F7/CN): AC 3 (chain mail armor, Dexterity); MV 12; hp 51, 43, 42, 37, 35; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+2 (*long sword +2*); SA Strength bonus (+1 bonus to attack rolls, +2 to damage); SZ M (6′ tall); ML champion (16); Int high (15); XP 975.

✦ IN THE MARKET WARD ✦

The next morning, provided they receive the clue to the Third Door's gate key, the heroes head toward Wharf Street and Bizarre Boulevard in the Market Ward. Like most parts of this ward, this corner bustles with activity. The crowds are thick and persistent, searching for bargains in the stalls and shops throughout the area. When the heroes arrive, a huge man disengages from the crowd and strolls toward them. Read the following:

> YOU WANT ME TO STEP IN WHERE?
> — A HERO STANDING BEFORE THE GREAT CORTELESTIAL IN THE MARKET WARD

Caravan is one of Estavan's best agents. He's a consummate trader, an excellent negotiator, and a powerful fighter when the need arises. His quarterstaff and leather coat are magical. The former serves as his weapon of choice, while the latter contains dozens of enchanted pockets in which he can carry an inordinate amount of goods. In effect, he's a one-man caravan – which works great as he prefers to operate on his own. He also wears a chain-mail tunic under his shirt for added protection. He's friendly enough, but he knows how good he is and, thus, usually winds up humoring those that Estavan saddles him with (like the heroes). Caravan has one mission: to make sure that the mercurial escapes from his prison beyond the Third Door. However, he won't make his mission known to the heroes.

Caravan (Pl/♂ Human/F9/Free League/LN): AC –1 (*chain mail +3*, Dexterity); MV 12; F9; hp 57; THAC0 12; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d6+2 (*quarterstaff +2*); SA Strength (+2 bonus to attack rolls, +5 to damage); SZ M (8′ tall); ML champion (16); Int high (16); AL LN.

THE CORTELESTIAL

On the corner of Wharf and Bizarre, on the street in front of Beranto's Map Shop, a huge beast sits calmly, watching the crowd pass by. Read the following:

Other than the normal doors to the various local shops, you don't see anything that might be the Third Door. You do, however, notice a monstrous beast sitting on the cobblestone sidewalk. It's huge, with a large armored body, a larger armored head, and tiny eyes that seem to be looking right at you. Now that you're studying the creature, you notice the tell-tale glow that marks it as a portal of some kind. It opens its wide mouth in an apparent smile and nods in your direction.

The creature is a rare planar beast called a cortelestial. These creatures have the unique property of actually being

doors to other realms. As it's considered bad luck to harm a cortelestial and the beast never harms anyone (except for the occasional berk without the proper key), the Cagers let the creature be. After the blink cycle ends, it leaves Sigil – just as these creatures have done since the portals first blinked.

To use this door, one of the heroes must face the cortelestial and show no fear. 'Course, getting close enough to stare into its tiny eyes and peer into its deadly mouth can scare even the most powerful bloods. When a hero approaches the cortelestial, the two lock eyes and the beast lowers its huge jaw to the ground. The open mouth forms the portal to Logicus.

The hero who decides to face down the beast must make a Wisdom check with a –4 penalty. If the check succeeds, the heroes can step through the portal to the distant realm. If the check fails, the hero becomes frightened and disoriented, walking forward in a daze. (If the check fails, Caravan grabs the hapless hero before he steps into the deadly maw and becomes the creature's lunch. This angers the cortelestial, but it allows a second attempt to show bravery – though it has to be made by a different hero.)

When the conditions are right and the hero steps into the cortelestial's tooth-filled maw, the Third Door is activated.

CORTELESTIAL: AC 5; MV 12; HD 14+3; hp 72; THAC0 5; #AT 3 (claw/claw/bite); Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d12; SA crush (if the creature inflicts maximum damage with its bite, roll the die again, adding the results together), cause fear (opponent must make a successful Wisdom check with a –4 penalty or become disoriented for 2d4 rounds), swallow whole (on a natural attack roll of 20, the creature swallows one opponent, man-sized or smaller); SD +2 magical weapon or better to hit; SZ H (20′ long); ML fearless (20); Int high (14); AL N; XP 8,000.

A WORLD ✦ WITHOUT MAGIC ✦

The world beyond the Third Door exists in a sealed crystal sphere. There are very few ways to reach this world. The intermittent portal in the Market Ward is one of the most reliable. This prime-material world is very different from other places the heroes may have visited. First, a terrible accident nearly destroyed the world many thousands of years ago, so today it consists of chunks of land and strange structures floating in a huge bubble of air. Second, except for the magic that was used to save the world (and is still in effect holding the air bubble together), no wizardly or priestly magic works here.

The following things don't operate on this prime world: wizard spells beyond 1st level, priest spells beyond 2nd level, magical weapons, and magical items. However, the gate key continues to function, as does the intermittent portal. Also, any spell-like abilities that heroes possess due to their race continue to operate.

$2(\gamma/\sqrt{35}) \square \frac{5}{8}(879z)!$

— LOGICUS UNIT 378, UPON SEEING THE HEROES STEP OUT OF THE CORTELESTIAL'S MOUTH

This world is called Logicus. Refer to the map of Logicus on the map sheet when running this adventure. Logicus is not a solid planet. It consists of clusters of constructed platforms and chunks of planetary debris float throughout the bubble of air. Each component in a cluster is called a module. There are four modules in the local cluster: the Module of the Beast's Sanctuary (area 1), the Module of the Omenotron (area 2), the Module of Earth and Water (area 3), and the Sealed Module (area 4). These locations are described below.

THE LOGICUS UNITS

The inhabitants of Logicus refer to themselves as "units." Traces of human, elf, and dwarf blood can be seen in the features of these beings, but they have evolved far beyond what the heroes know of such races. The units are as much machine as living flesh and blood, strange conglomerates of sinew, circuitry, bone, and metallic gears. They are a steady, unemotional species who long ago gave up the randomness of passion and free will. Instead, they've embraced the serene, programmed awareness of machines. To the heroes, they appear to be cold, lifeless automatons sharing a single mind.

What driving passion is left in the units emerges in the deadly games played in the Module of Earth and Water. Here, the warlike passions and extreme lusts of their still-human hearts can be given free reign without harming society. In fact, when the heroes arrive, an important contest is being conducted to determine the leader of Logicus for the next prime term. The chief rivals are the current Logicus Prime and Unit 822.

Note that all of the inhabitants are called "Unit," followed by a number. Odd numbers are assigned to males, even numbers to females. All units carry lightning guns and shock staves. The former fires a concentrated bolt of lightning at a single target, the latter serves as a melee weapon. All units wear flight belts that allow them to travel through the open air between modules at a rate of 15 with a maneuverability code of C. Every member of this race is connected to the World Mind, a powerful computer that keeps the modules in their orbits and siphons the magic of the world to keep the air bubble intact.

The current Logicus Prime is a modron who wandered to this world 500 years ago. As the philosophies of Logicus were so much like those of the modrons, the modron felt right at home. A "prime term" lasts 500 years (the time between blink cycles). The World Mind keeps a Prime Unit (the world leader) functioning until the next leader is chosen. Usually, the right to challenge for the title of Logicus Prime goes to whoever emerges from the mouth of the cortelestial, but there's a process for allowing local units to compete. Though Logicus Prime is competing for renewal of his post, his champion is Unit 437. It's the champion's job to actually participate in the dangerous contest.

THE REAL CHANT: The technological items can be used by the heroes while they're in Logicus. If any of these items are taken to Sigil, they stop functioning in a short period of time. Every time a Logicus item is used outside of Logicus, roll 1d4. On a roll of 1, the item stops working and cannot be repaired.

TYPICAL UNIT: AC 3; MV 9, Fl 15(C); F2; hp 18; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6+1 (lightning gun) or 1d8+1 (shock staff); SZ M (5′ tall); ML steady (12); Int genius (17); AL LN; XP 175.

1. MODULE OF THE BEAST'S SANCTUARY

When the heroes arrive on this island of metal and glass, they emerge from the open maw of another cortelestial into a clearing of smooth lines and glowing edges. The beast sits in a place of honor. In fact, it appears that the whole area has been constructed around the beast's resting place. When the heroes take a moment to look around, read the following:

You stand atop a long, flat rectangle of metal and glass floating high in the sky. Billowing clouds rush by, and you can see other geometric shapes floating in the distance. The beast that you emerged from remains silent and watchful, offering no hints about this strange place. Perhaps the two figures walking toward you can provide more useful information.

The two figures are servers whose job it is to care for the cortelestial when it visits and welcome any who emerge from its mouth. The units speak in rapid mathematical formulas, so the heroes won't be able to understand a word they say. Read the following:

The two figures draw close, moving with stiff, almost mechanical motions. One looks to be a human male and the other an elf female. However, they wear light armor of an unusual sort that seems to be grafted directly to their skin in spots. They stop about six feet away from you, and the male opens his mouth to speak. "375÷23?" he asks. "42," the female adds ominously. A moment later, he extends a weird tube from a compartment on his chest and presses it to your head. "√849÷12x876? Can you understand this unit now?"

Once the units use the translation tube, the heroes can understand them. The servers speak what sounds like common (though that's just an illusion provided by the translation tube) with a slow, mechanical precision not at all like the formulas they were spouting before.

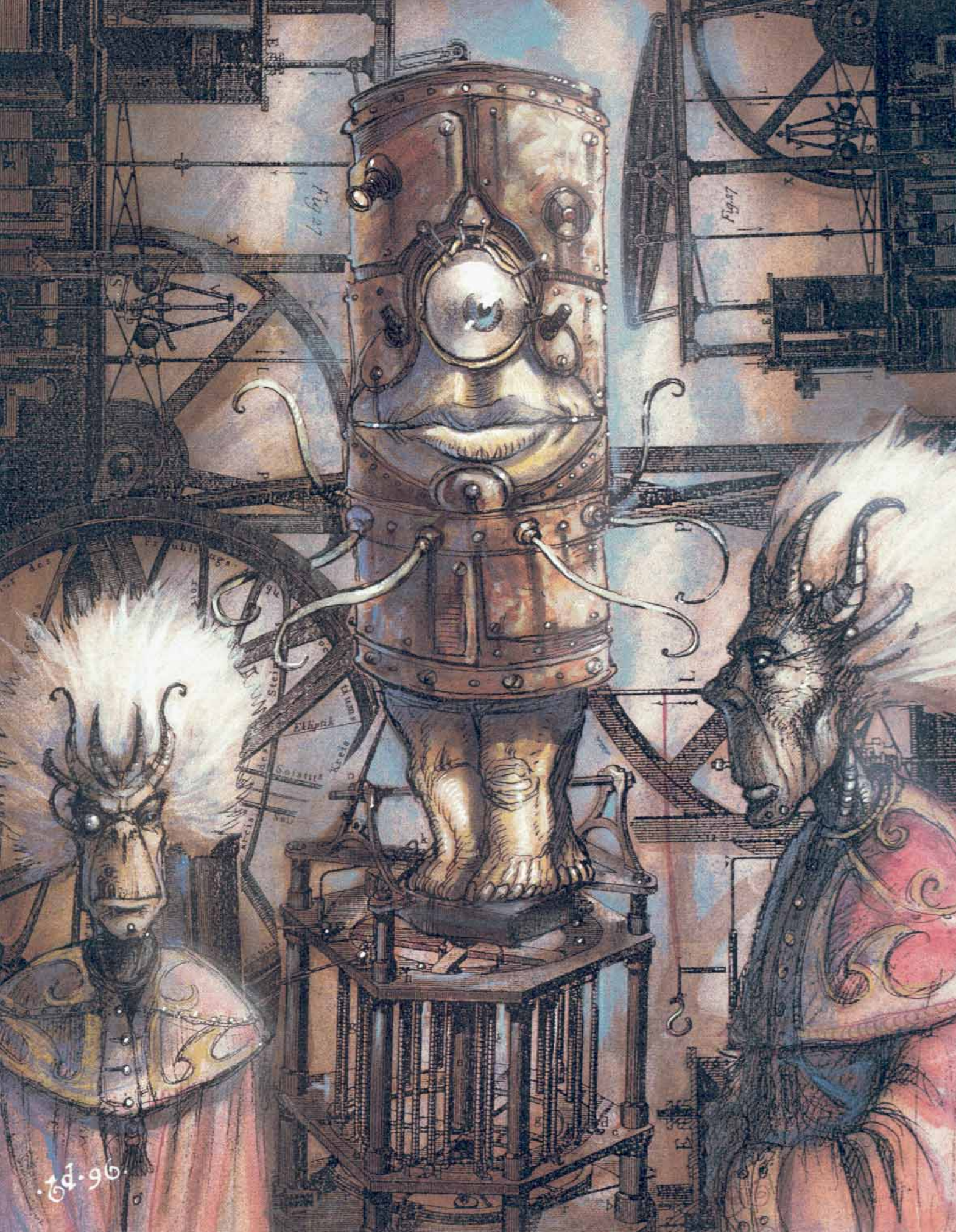
Because the appearance of the cortelestial is so important to the Logicus world view, the servers occupy places of honor in the society. When the cortelestial returns, the servers care for it, feed it, and wait to see what beings might step from its great maw. The servers take this job very seriously, as there's a good chance that whoever emerges from the maw might become the next Logicus Prime. After the translation tube has been activated, read or paraphrase the following:

"Welcome to Logicus. What is your unit designation?" the female asks. "What module do you transfer from?" the male queries. "What program do you follow?" the female inquires. "Do you challenge for Logicus Prime?" the male demands to know.

Let the heroes answer these questions as they see fit. If they ask questions in return, the servers reply in precise terms that may or may not help the heroes. Eventually, Caravan steps forward. "I bring greetings from the Lady," he says, bowing to the servers. "She hopes the system functions well." This seems to satisfy the servers, who welcome Caravan and the heroes. The servers provide each visitor with a flight belt, then go back to caring for the cortelestial. If the heroes ask Caravan what he was talking about, he explains, "I was just telling them what Estavan told me to say."

DM NOTE: If the heroes agree to challenge for Logicus Prime, the servers demand to know who the challenger is. One server grabs any hero who steps forward and transports him to the Module of Earth and Water before the others are given flight belts. Go on to location 3.

Shortly after arriving in Logicus, Caravan slips away and heads for the prison (location 4) to free Lathuraz. The heroes can find him if they go to location 4, but they will arrive too late to stop him.


Fig. 27
Ekliptik

2. MODULE OF THE OMENOTRON

The platform known as the Module of the Omenotron appears to be a center of knowledge, perhaps even a holy place to the units. The entire module is actually a vast machine, a computer designed to catalog and interpret portents from around the multiverse. It can actually see into other planes, studying one location at a time as it searches for hints of pivotal events.

Beings who look like dabus but have the same mechanical treatment as the rest of the Logicus units float around the module with their flight belts, adjusting dials and flipping switches. Like the dabus, these programmers speak in picture symbols, but these picture symbols appear as complex mathematical formulas, like the language spoken by the other units.

The programmers ignore the heroes unless they try to damage the machine. Then scores of them appear to drive off the intruders. The machine keeps track of great events and can predict the future. It provides data that the programmers then give to the World Mind to help it calculate probabilities. The machine currently predicts that a time of massive change is coming – change that will effect the entire multiverse. The heroes can learn of this omen, but they won't receive any other details.

Logicus Prime, a great and ancient modron, is plugged into a throne at the center of the omenotron. The data flows through the modron's mind, helping him make decisions for Logicus. If the heroes approach the modron, a programmer floats over and tries to make them move on. Logicus Prime can't be disturbed while in this state, as his mind is joined with the omenotron. However, the modron sometimes makes ominous proclamations during these periods. Read the following:

The dabuslike being apparently wants you to move away, but the weird modron suddenly opens its eyes. Lines of arcane symbols scroll across its eyes, and the modron speaks. "The modrons march before their time, and the wand is back in the Dead One's hand!" With that, the modron's eyes close, and the programmers around you all hurry to push buttons on the great machine.

A smooth plaque over the throne shows a dabus picture-message that appears to be connected to the ones the heroes spotted in the other realms. Like them, this is another part of the three-part key to the Fourth Door. Show the players Dabus Message 3 from the cover flap. The message reads: "Address the door, magnificent. It opens to the touch."

PROGRAMMER: AC 5; MV 9, Fl 12(B); HD 5; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6+1 (lightning gun) or 1d8+1 (shock staff); SZ M (6' tall); ML elite (14); Int genius (18); AL LN.

3. MODULE OF EARTH AND WATER

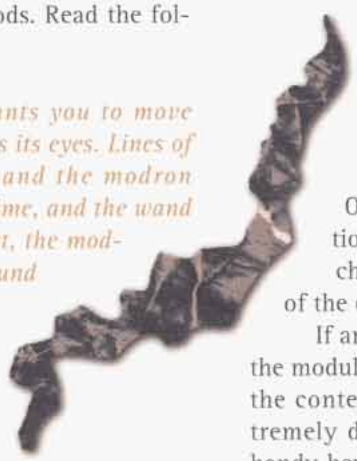
This isn't a construct, but a remnant of the original planet. It's a chunk of wooded mountain with a stream and a small lake. Here, the contest for the next Logicus Prime plays out. If the heroes visit this part of the local cluster, they can't help getting involved.

Here, all passions and aggressive tendencies, long buried by the units, are set free. Various beasts inhabit this module, including creatures native to this prime world and some things that have arrived from other planes. Unlike most of Logicus, natural chunks like this module are random and unpredictable – making them especially dangerous to units.



Currently, two units are locked in a fierce competition to determine the next leader and depository for the World Mind for the next prime term. It's an important contest, for most units believe that the Time of Change will begin during the upcoming cycle. In addition to the two units, a third contestant has thrown his hat in the ring. A green slaad arrived a few days ago, determined to find power beyond the Third Door.

The contest is simple. The contestants must survive the dangers of the mountain (including the other contestants) and reach a predetermined point on the module (the highest visible mountain peak, marked with a bright red flag). The first to reach this point, or the sole survivor, is declared the next Logicus Prime. Unit 437 represents the current Logicus Prime, so if he wins, the modron continues to lead the world (which is a good thing, as the modron is an excellent leader). Unit 822 seeks the World Mind throne for herself. She won't be a bad leader, but she doesn't have the vision and willpower to match the current Logicus Prime. Orgurr the Slaad answered yes to the server's question and now seeks to win the throne. He's a terrible choice for leader, but he's clearly the more powerful of the contestants.



If any hero decided to enter the contest, he must go to the module alone. The hero must then figure out how to lose the contest without dying. (The slaad will make this extremely difficult.) The modron cube could come in very handy here. To keep from having to fight the slaad and the Units simultaneously (or from having to fight the Units at all), the hero could distract the Units with the cube. The mathematical nature of the Units causes them to be briefly entranced by this complicated puzzle.

The better way for the heroes to get involved is to receive a request for help from the World Mind. A unit approaches them and speaks for the World Mind, asking that they help defeat the slaad so that the contest can be settled fairly by the true contestants.

DM Note: If the heroes help defeat the slaad or if one of them actually wins the contest, Logicus Prime awards them with the *sword of Lathuraz*. The sword operates as a *long sword +1* except against mercurials. When employed against a mercurial, the magical bonus increases to +4, and the damage inflicted can't be healed unless the mercurial returns to its home realm.

Should a hero win the contest, he must either decline the position or become an NPC, since he would be hooked into the World Mind and must remain in Logicus for the next 500 years. If the hero declines, another contest must be held to determine the new leader.



Mountain Beast: AC 6; MV 12; HD 3+1; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA rear claws (1d4 each); SD surprised only on a 1; SZ M (5' long); ML average (9); Int semi- (3); AL N; XP 270.

Green Slaad: AC 0; MV 9; HD 9+5; hp 42; THAC0 11; #AT 3 (claw/claw/bite); Dmg 1d6+2/1d6+2/2d8; SA/SD spell-like abilities, +1 weapon or better to hit; SZ L (7' tall); ML elite (14); Int average (8); AL CN; XP 11,000.

Spell-like Abilities: *darkness 15' radius, delayed blast fireball , detect invisibility, detect magic, ESP, fear, locate object, produce flame, telekinesis* (all once per day), *gate* (twice per day, but doesn't work in Logicus), *polymorph* (at will into human form).

4. THE SEALED MODULE

This cube has served as Lathuraz's prison for millennia. The mercurial was close to freeing himself when Caravan arrived and opened the door. The heroes arrive at this location after the prison has been opened. Read the following:

Light explodes from the door in the cube, and you see a horrible sight lying on the cold metal floor near Caravan. It's a skinned humanoid. All that remains are the inner flesh and the internal organs. It looks like a bloody worm in a vaguely human shape.

The boneless pile of internal organs rises. Eyes the color of pure gold peer out of the bloody flesh, and the slit that is its mouth parts. "Tell the Cage that Lathuraz hasn't forgotten it," the words bubble from the cracked slit. "Tell the Lady I am coming back."

Caravan makes no excuses for his actions. If the heroes have the sword, Lathuraz eyes them curiously. He keeps his distance, waiting for an opportunity to make his escape. At this point, two things happen at once.

First, eight units arrive to battle the heroes, providing Lathuraz with an opportunity to escape. They have disconnected themselves from the World Mind in order to help Lathuraz reach freedom, for it's their belief that the Time of Change needs the mercurial as a catalyst. Use the statistics for a typical unit.

Second, Lathuraz merges with Caravan, borrowing his body. He attacks the heroes if necessary but seeks to use Caravan's flight belt to reach the Module of the Beast's Sanctuary as soon as possible.

During the confusion, have each hero make a Wisdom check. Any hero who makes the check notices a set of manacles lying near the spot where they first saw Lathuraz. These are the *manacles of lesser reality* that Caravan removed from Lathuraz. The heroes might want to retrieve these before departing Logicus. The manacles prevent a mercurial from using any of his hyper-reality powers. These manacles can be put on a mercurial already wearing the *cloak of trapping* (with a successful attack roll) or on an unconscious mercurial.

Slipping the Blinds: Lathuraz must escape at this point. The heroes can make it hard for him, but between the rogue units and Caravan's borrowed form, the mercurial should be able to get away.

✦ RETURNING TO SIGIL ✦

After the heroes recover the sword and the manacles and find the dabus message, it's time to return to the Cage. Logicus Prime urges them to find the mercurial quickly.

To return to Sigil, the heroes must make use of the portal inside the cortelestial. The same process of testing for bravery must be used to activate this door.

When the heroes return to the Cage, they find Caravan lying in the street near to the cortelestial. (The next adventure begins at precisely this point.) Lathuraz used Caravan to return to Sigil, but he has since found another host. Caravan survived only because he has a powerful Constitution and Lathuraz was in a hurry.

"Go see Estavan," Caravan tells them. "I believe he has information to share with you."

✦ AWARDS ✦

If the heroes protect Lissandra or Fell from the fanatics, they receive 1,000 XP each.

Any hero who attempts to face down the cortelestial receives 350 XP. If he succeeds, add another 350 XP.

If the heroes aid the units against the slaad, award them 1,000 XP each.

If the heroes receive the *sword of Lathuraz* and carry it back to Sigil, they receive 500 XP each.

If the heroes find the *manacles of lesser reality* and carry them back to Sigil, they receive 1,000 XP each.

If the heroes locate the third dabus message, give them 500 XP each.

The Fourth Door: A Reality Beyond

This adventure is designed for a party of four to six player character heroes of 7th to 10th level. The events herein play out during the final two weeks of the current blink cycle. This adventure must be the last one played in this series. The heroes have had no way to access the Fourth Door before this time. 'Course, now these cutters have a couple of options open to them.

If the heroes gathered and translated the three dabus messages from the places beyond the first three doors, they can open the Fourth Door whenever they want to. Conversely, the heroes can try to follow Lathuraz through the door when he decides to make the trip. The latter involves either tracking down the mercurial or taking up a position near the Fourth Door and waiting for him to arrive. If the heroes secured the *rod of mercury*, they have the means for tracking Lathuraz.

However the heroes decide to proceed, this adventure starts in the Cage and ends up in a place beyond the reality that the heroes know – a place where everything is more real, and therefore more deadly.

✦ Lathuraz the Mercurial ✦

I GIVE YOU
THE GIFT OF INTENSITY!
I WANT YOU TO
REALLY EXPERIENCE
THE WAY YOUR ORGANS MELT.

— LATHURAZ, AS HE "BORROWS" A CAGER'S FORM

Lathuraz the mercurial is a creature from a higher reality. Unlike his brethren, who are content to bask in the relative closeness of the power they worship, Lathuraz wants to be more than a follower. The mercurial wants to conquer, to become a god to the lesser entities who inhabit the multiverse beyond his home reality. While the other mercurials strive to be closer to the pure thoughts of their deity, Lathuraz uses his powers to enslave and exploit.

This adventure begins the moment Lathuraz steps through the Third Door and returns to Sigil. From that point on, the events of this adventure – both background events and events involving the heroes – play out as described herein. Lathuraz has three goals: to gather aid in Sigil, to activate the Fourth Door and travel to his home realm to regain his strength, and to return to Sigil and renew his campaign of conquest. These goals are described below.

- Gather aid: Lathuraz doesn't want followers just yet; starting a new religion takes time. Time isn't in great supply right now, so the mercurial uses "borrowed" forms to solicit assistance. He exploits the Society of the Locked Door by borrowing the body of their leader. This provides him with a ready and willing group of fanatics to exploit.

- The Fourth Door: Lathuraz needs to return to his home realm to recharge his depleted energy. He also needs to check that his hidden skin and bones are safe, because they can be used to destroy him.
- Conquest: After accomplishing the first two goals, Lathuraz plans to return to Sigil. He knows that the current blink cycle is coming to an end; once that occurs he'll be cut off from either the Cage or his home realm (depending upon which side of the door he's on at the time) for 500 years. Using Sigil as a base, the mercurial wants to travel the multiverse, gaining power and spreading terror wherever he goes.

The Real Chant: Estavan of the Planar Trade Consortium has his own ideas concerning Lathuraz. He plans to send a powerful group of cutters through the Fourth Door with the mercurial. Estavan has deduced that not only are the skin and bones of the mercurial its source of power, they're also the means through which it can be destroyed once and for all.

✦ SIGIL ENCOUNTERS ✦

Before Lathuraz is ready to activate the Fourth Door (or before the heroes make the trip on their own), a few encounters take place. Some of these may involve the heroes, while others may occur "off-stage" as the heroes take care of their own business. These encounters are described below.

THE FIRST BODY

After the heroes return to Sigil and find Caravan (see the end of the previous adventure), read or paraphrase the following:

The Cage. Nowhere else smells quite the same. The creature you stepped out of moments ago regards you curiously as you speak to Caravan, then turns its eyes to find something more interesting to look at. The wonders of the Market Ward stretch before you, including the aroma of fresh-baked bread. Before you can track down the source of the smell, a scream erupts from a nearby alley.

"Murder!" the screamer yells. "Disgusting, mutilating murder!"

In the alley, the heroes discover the body of a Cager. The strange thing is, the body consists only of skin and bones. There's no blood, no inner flesh or organs, no exposed muscle – just the outer layer of skin hanging loosely over the clean bones. Lathuraz merged with this Cager after departing Caravan, but the berk wasn't strong enough to last very long, so the mercurial was forced to discard him in favor of a more powerful host. If the heroes have the *rod of mercury*, it glows, and the mercury inside shifts to tug the rod deeper into the alley. The heroes can follow the rod's pull for a while, but time is growing short, and they still need to meet with Estavan.

OTHER BODIES

Over the next two days, Lathuraz leaves a trail of discarded bodies from the Market Ward to The Lady's Ward. He uses at least six different bodies to make his way toward the Fourth Door. These include a Harmonium basher with the city watch, a tiefling serving girl on her way to the inn where she works, and a dwarf shopkeeper closing for the night. When Lathuraz enters a host body, his inner organs replace the ones belonging to the host. This kills the host and provides sustenance to the mercurial. A host loses 1d4 Constitution points per turn; upon reaching a 0 Constitution, the host dies. If Lathuraz leaves the host before this occurs, the host could live. (Make a saving throw vs. petrification to determine survival.) The mercurial can continue to use a host's skin and bones even after the host dies.

Eventually, Lathuraz discovers the Society of the Locked Door. He has no love of the fanatics' cause, but he needs an army in his coming struggle. These fanatics, Lathuraz decides, fit the bill nicely. Toward this end, he borrows the form of their leader, a human cutter named Cuth Banthor (Pl/♂ human/F9/Xaositect/CN). Using Banthor's body, Lathuraz tells the fanatics that the power to shut the portals forever waits beyond the Fourth Door. "Guard that door until I return," he tells them. "Let no one follow me or hinder my return."

FINDING A MERCURIAL

If the heroes do decide to follow the *rod of mercury* for more than an hour, they eventually locate a mercurial – Zarulaz, Lathuraz's brother. The rod leads them to a basement in The Lady's Ward. There, hidden beneath a pile of dirty blankets, is the wormlike form of inner flesh and organs that constitutes the good mercurial. Zarulaz's wounds are still visible, so the heroes should be able to tell the difference between the two mercurials. Zarulaz waits near the Fourth Door, knowing that his brother will eventually seek out the portal.

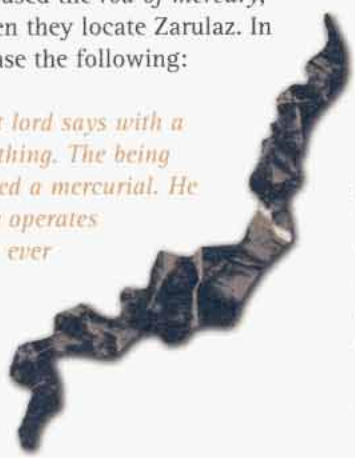


"You seek Lathuraz," the skinned and boneless humanoid states calmly. "I hope you can use the other items with as much precision. He is near, I can feel his presence. Soon he will step through the portal and renew his strength. You must follow him when he does, for he can only be destroyed in the higher reality."

Estavan enters the scene at this point, as he's been caring for the mercurial. "Welcome back," the merchant lord says. Go to "Estavan's Tale."

✦ ESTAVAN'S TALE ✦

If the heroes follow Caravan's advice, they seek out Estavan to find out exactly what's going on. Surprisingly, this time Estavan tells them. If the heroes used the *rod of mercury*, then Estavan comes to them when they locate Zarulaz. In either situation, read or paraphrase the following:



"You're right," the merchant lord says with a sigh, "you deserve to know everything. The being that escaped from Logicus is called a mercurial. He comes from a place where reality operates in a fashion unlike any you have ever known. He terrorized Sigil and other parts of the multiverse a long time ago, before a group of Cagers got together and banished him into the blink. However, I recently learned that the bonds holding him were weakening. Before he can regain his power, we must destroy him, and that can only be accomplished in the realm of his origin – beyond The Lady's Ward portal."

Estavan goes on to explain that the mercurials arrived in Sigil through the door in The Lady's Ward and that their skin and bones are somewhere beyond that intermittent portal. "Lathuraz will seek out the rest of his body, for like a vampire who must return to its coffin, the mercurial must draw power from his skin and bones," Estavan adds. If the heroes have a problem grasping this, Estavan tells them, "You don't have to understand the dark of it, you just have to believe it. Like fiends, the mercurials can die only on their home plane – and only if their skin and bones are destroyed."

If the heroes have the key to the Fourth Door (revealed by the three dabus messages from the other portals), they can try to beat Lathuraz to the resting place of his skin and bones. If not, they have to either step through when the mercurial activates the portal or persuade Zarulaz to help.

✦ AT THE FOURTH DOOR ✦

The Fourth Door is located in an otherwise blank tower at the end of Lady's Row in The Lady's Ward. If the heroes have figured out the key necessary to activate the portal, they arrive before Lathuraz, but they still have to contend with the guards the mercurial has put in place. If they intend to follow the mercurial through the portal, then even more guards are place by that time.

IF THE HEROES HAVE THE KEY . . .

If the heroes have the key to the Fourth Door (through either translating the dabus messages or convincing Zarulaz to assist them), then proceed with this scene. Read the following:

Six berks dressed in black and wearing black masks stand near the Fourth Door. They look like members of the Society of the Locked Door, the fanatics you've battled more than once since all of this started. These fanatics, however, aren't trying to destroy the portal or deface it with slogans. This time they appear to be guarding it!

To reach the Fourth Door, the heroes must get past the six fanatics. The mercurial, now occupying the body of the fanatics' leader, ordered them to stand guard while he went off to take care of other details. Thanks to Lathuraz's powerful charisma, these fanatics defend the portal to the death, doing everything in their power to keep the heroes from activating it.

To open the door, a body must perform the actions indicated by the dabus messages. These three messages read:

"Bow to the right; bow to the left. The first key turns; the last door bends. Lift the left; lift the right. The leg extends; the second key lights. Address the door, magnificent. It opens to the touch." After each action is performed the door glows brighter. When the word "magnificent" is spoken, it becomes positively blinding.

If the heroes can get past the guards and activate the portal in one turn (10 combat rounds), they reach the higher reality before Lathuraz returns. If the battle with the guards goes on longer than one turn, Lathuraz arrives with two additional guards. The evil mercurial sneers at the heroes, orders his other guards into the fray and strides boldly toward the portal. He's wearing the body of Cuth Banthor, so the heroes may not even realize that he's Lathuraz until it's too late. As the battle continues, he activates the portal and steps through.

DM Note: If Zarulaz returned to Sigil at the end of the second adventure, then he demands to accompany the heroes through the Fourth Door. Estavan agrees that this is the best course of action. However, Zarulaz is too weak to be much help in any battles, so make sure the heroes don't expect his aid in that regard.

Fanatic Guards (6) (Pl/Var Var/F8/CN): AC 4; MV 12; hp 57, 54, 49, 45, 41, 36; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+1 (*long swords +1*); SA Strength bonus (+1 bonus to damage and attack rolls); SZ M (6′ tall); ML champion (18); Int high (14); XP 1,400.

Lathuraz as Cuth Banthor (Pl/♂ human/F9/Xaositect/ LE): AC 2 (*chain mail +3*); MV 12; hp 78; THAC0 11; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+2 (*long sword +2*); SA Strength bonus (+1 bonus to damage and attack rolls); SD all damage is inflicted against the host, not the mercurial; SZ M (6′ tall); ML champion (18); Int genius (17); XP 2,000.

IF THE HEROES TRY TO FOLLOW . . .

If the heroes don't have the key or if they decide to follow Lathuraz through the portal, use this scene.

The heroes arrive at the tower and notice not only the black-clad fanatics, but a figure who's obviously their leader. Read the following:

Eight berks dressed in black and wearing black masks stand before the door in the tower. Another berk, this one also wearing a black cape, addresses the others from a place right in front of the portal. "Fellow members of the Society," the leader says, "Soon we will be able to lock all the portals and make Sigil safe from the Clueless who would destroy it. Guard this portal until I return, and greatness shall be within our grasp!"

Lathuraz, in the body of the SLD's leader, prepares to step through the Fourth Door. The heroes must get past the eight fanatics in order to follow him. In effect, it takes Lathuraz five rounds to give his final orders and activate the portal. He steps through at the beginning of the sixth round. At the start of the seventh round, the portal closes. The heroes must step through during the sixth round if they want to follow Lathuraz.

Fanatic Guards (8) (Pl/Var Var/F8/CN): AC 4; MV 12; hp 64, 60, 59, 57, 52, 48, 43, 41; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+1 (*long swords +1*); SA Strength bonus (+1 bonus to damage and attack rolls); SZ M (6′ tall); ML champion (18); Int high (14); XP 1,400.

Slipping the Blinds: If the heroes don't make it to the portal before it closes, then they must open it on their own. If they witnessed Lathuraz opening the portal, they might be able to solve the dabus clues themselves. If not, perhaps Lissandra or Fell can arrive to assist them. Either one can help them figure out the dabus messages that they received in the earlier adventures or even provide a missing piece from some ancient tome.

A HIGHER REALITY

The place beyond the Fourth Door consists of the fourth-level of reality. Some sages call this hyper-reality. Events that take place here are more real than the reality most characters know. In hyper-reality, everything has more vitality, colors are brighter, scents are stronger, sounds are more intense, and emotions are more stirring. In short, the intensity of all effects that occur here is greater by a significant degree.

To reflect this, some normal game rules have been changed, as summarized below:

- All damage rolls are doubled in hyper-reality. A weapon that normally inflicts 1d8+1 points of damage inflicts 2d8+2 here.
- The effect, range, duration, and area of effect of all spells are doubled. Note that only those results that *can be* doubled *are* doubled. For example, doubling a permanent effect or an unlimited range has no meaning.
- Movement rates are doubled while traveling in this level of reality.
- Experience points are calculated at double the normal rate for all encounters that take place in hyper-reality.



Unless otherwise indicated, all applicable numbers in this chapter have already been adjusted.

Refer to the map of Beldaari when running this portion of the adventure.

BELDAARI

Beldaari is a secluded region of Mount Celestia. It's the realm of an unnamed power dedicated to pure thought. It doesn't matter what layer the realm occupies, since it could be any one of them (or all of them) at the power's whim. However, this power doesn't usually have whims. It exists as pure, unencumbered thought, and its realm exists at a higher level of reality than the rest of the plane around it.

The realm consists of a lush forest, which is more colorful and alive than any prime forest the heroes have ever visited. Every sense receives double the normal information from the vibrant components of this reality, making life here that much more intense and overwhelming to those not accustomed to this kind of existence. In addition to the mercurials, various creatures that exist as energy or thought, such as will o'wisps (that feed on happiness instead of panic) and good incarnates, can be found in this realm. As the heroes have a specific destination in mind (the hiding place containing Lathuraz's skin and bones) and time is running out as the blink cycle nears its end, only a small portion of the realm is depicted on the map.

1. ARRIVAL

The portal opens beside a forest path. From this side, the Fourth Door takes the form of a huge knot in the side of a giant tree trunk. The moment the heroes step into this higher reality, have them each make a saving throw vs. paralyzation. Those heroes who fail the roll are overwhelmed by the intense sights, sounds, and smells assaulting their senses. Those who succeed notice the sudden differences but can function more or less normally. Read the following:

You step onto a grassy path. Behind you, the portal glow subsides, and you see that you have emerged from a huge knot in a giant tree trunk. You immediately notice differences in the world around you. The air seems thicker and sweeter to your nose, and when you breath a hundred different flavors carried on the breeze assault your taste buds. The gentle caress of the breeze feels like a thousand fingers lightly touching your exposed flesh. Your eyes squint in response to colors and light so vibrant as to be painful and beautiful at the same time. Even the sounds seem clearer and more distinct, from the call of distant birds to the hum of insistent insects.

Any hero who fails his saving throws is so overwhelmed by the intensity of this reality that he can't function for a time and must be led around. Once every turn, this hero must attempt the saving throw vs. paralyzation. As before, a hero who succeeds can function normally, but a hero who fails can take no actions until he makes a successful saving throw.

DM Note: The *rod of mercury* isn't useless in Beldaari, but it's more difficult to locate Lathuraz since there're a lot of mercurials here. If the heroes try to employ it to locate Lathuraz, roll 1d6. On a roll of 1 or 2, it locks onto the evil mercurial. On any other roll, it leads the heroes to a random mercurial. In this case, use one of the encounters presented below.

If Lathuraz Arrives First, he needs to reach his skin and bones to recover all of his power, but he certainly gets a boost just by returning to his home realm. Here, thoughts become reality if a mercurial wants them to be. To hinder the heroes (or anyone else who might be able to follow him), Lathuraz mentally orders the nearest trees to attack whoever emerges from the portal. Three trees obey the mental command, attacking until the thought looses consistency (which occurs when a tree is reduced to one-quarter of its original hit point total). Though the trees behave like treants, they display no intelligence. They simply act out the Lathuraz's orders. They can move, using their roots like legs and their branches like claw-tipped limbs. When reduced to one-quarter of their hit-point total, the trees stop moving and return to their original state.

Animated Trees (3): AC 0; MV 6; HD 12; hp 80, 64, 56; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg 4d6/4d6; SW fire-based attacks receive +4 bonus to attack rolls and +1 bonus to damage rolls against these trees, saves against fire with a –4 penalty; SZ H (18' tall); ML champion (15); Int non (0); AL N; XP 5,000 each.

If the Heroes Arrive First, they can attempt to locate Lathuraz's skin and bones. If Zarulaz is with them, he can lead them to the hiding place. If not, the heroes can wander around aimlessly or wait for Lathuraz to arrive. When the evil mercurial shows up, he takes advantage of his returning strength to animate three trees with a single thought. The trees behave as described above while Lathuraz attempts to flee. If the heroes were waiting near the portal, they must deal with the trees before they can follow the mercurial.



DO YOU HAVE A THOUGHT TO SHARE, LESSER ONE?

— A MERCURIAL'S QUESTION TO ONE OF THE HEROES



2. MEETING MERCURIALS

The map shows three set encounters where the heroes meet up with mercurials. These encounters should each be run only once. These mercurials aren't like Lathuraz in any way. They're thoughtful, contemplative creatures living in close proximity to their god (and trying to get even closer). To the rest of mercurial society, Lathuraz is an insane, terribly ill being. They pity Lathuraz and even fear him a little, but they don't understand the threat he poses to the rest of the multiverse. As for the heroes, the mercurials consider them to be lesser creatures. They give the heroes the same consideration and attention the heroes would give a dog or cat. They're friendly and won't harm the heroes, but they won't think of them as capable of holding meaningful conversations.

2A — Contemplating Leaves. When the heroes reach this spot along the forest path, they see a clearing in the trees. There, four mercurials commune with their purest thoughts. Read the following:

Four of the creatures you've come to know as mercurials lie on their backs in the grass, their heads meeting almost at a point, looking up into the brilliant sky. Their eyes are open, but except for the telltale sign of a pumping heart or an expanding and deflating lung, they aren't moving at all.

As the heroes examine the situation, they notice a single leaf suspended in midair above the point where the four mercurials' heads meet. Every mercurial eye is locked on the leaf, studying its color, texture, and basic shape. These mercurials won't notice the heroes unless the heroes make a point of being noticed – calling out, touching a mercurial, or snatching at the leaf.

If the heroes do attract their attention, the mercurials insert friendly greetings directly into the heroes' minds. Immediately thereafter, the mercurials return their attention to

the leaf, not at all interested in creatures from a lesser reality. To these mercurials, the heroes deserve the same consideration as mundane animals. If pressed and asked about Lathuraz, two thoughts strike the heroes' minds simultaneously. "Great sadness associated with that one," they project. "Stay away from that one, for his illness may spread to you." They offer nothing else to the heroes, and if the heroes persist in disrupting their contemplation, the mercurials disappear in a discharge of powerful mental energy.

2B – Serene Water. A stone bridge crosses a serene river here, providing access to the forest path that continues on the other side. A single mercurial leans over the side of the bridge, peering into the water below. When the heroes approach, read the following:



"How like the thoughts that flow through the mind," the mercurial projects as you draw near. "Does water carry ideas and philosophies upon its ripples and waves, I wonder? If so, should such thoughts be left to drift away like so much flotsam? What do you think, lesser ones?"

The question is mostly rhetorical; the mercurial is simply (and literally) thinking out loud. If the heroes provide an answer (any answer), the mercurial looks at them quizzically and then bursts out laughing. No matter what the heroes do, the mercurial won't stop laughing hysterically. Attacking a laughing mercurial only makes him laugh harder, after which he disappears in an explosion of thought. If the heroes don't answer, the mercurial continues to contemplate the water. He refuses to interact with the heroes in any way and departs if they become rude or violent.

2C – Fear and Panic. When the heroes reach this spot along the forest path, they see a pair of mercurials rushing toward them. These mercurials have felt Lathuraz's return and have been affected by the mad thoughts he's projecting. Fear fills their minds, and panic seems to be the only reasonable response. The pair is so mad with fear that they attempt what any other mercurial would never do (except for Lathuraz and, reluctantly, Zarulaz): They try to merge with the heroes to escape Lathuraz's projected thoughts.

See the MC sheet at the end of this book for details on how mercurials merge with lesser beings. Because these mercurials aren't used to the process themselves, the heroes each receive a +2 bonus to their saving throws. If a mercurial manages to merge with a hero, he remains merged for 1d4+1 rounds, after which time, he withdraws. The hero is reduced in Constitution but comes through the merging otherwise unharmed.

Slipping the Blinds: If the heroes try to proceed along the forest path (and off the map), the mercurials recognize them by their primitive thoughts. "If you've come to slay Lathuraz," the mercurials project, "then why do you travel away from him? His place of solitude stands beside the Lake of Pure Thought in that direction." They point back the way the heroes came.

3. Forest Wisps

When the heroes enter the thick forest that surrounds the Lake of Pure Thought, they discover that not all of the inhabitants of Beldaari are benign and that too much happiness can be deadly. Read the following:

This portion of the forest is darker and thicker than the rest, but the sights and sounds are no less intense. You can hear the rush of water in the distance, but the sounds of animals and insects have diminished. After a while, you notice lights through the trees. Two balls of light float toward you, and you suddenly feel jubilant.

These wisps project waves of happiness that could alter a hero's mood. The mercurials interact with the wisps all the time, for the creatures help them reach a higher state of euphoria. Lesser beings like the heroes, however, can't control the give and take. They can be overwhelmed by the projected emotions and, thus, consumed by the wisps.

The wisps feed on the happiness that rises in their targets. Each time they project a wave of happiness, the target must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic to ignore the alien emotions. A failed saving throw indicates that the target embraces the good feelings and loses 4d8 hit points as the wisp feeds. If a wisp is reduced to 5 hit points or less, it flees.

Forest Wisps (2): AC –8; MV Fl 36 (A); HD 9; hp 46, 38; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg euphoria (save vs. death magic or lose 4d8 hp); SD immune to all spells except *protection from good*, *magic missile*, and *maze*; SZ S (3′ sphere); ML fanatic (17); Int exceptional (15); AL CG; XP 6,000 each.

4. Incarnates

Good incarnates roam Beldaari, basking in the good thoughts of the place before moving on to other places in the Upper Planes. When the heroes reach this location, they encounter three good incarnates looking for hosts to inhabit. They seek to join with heroes closest in alignment and temperament to themselves. In fact, these particular incarnates seek out the heroes in order to help them against Lathuraz. The incarnates automatically withdraw when the hosts leave Beldaari.

The heroes don't realize they're under attack, as incarnates are invisible. They do feel an increasing weakness in mind and body as they travel, until the incarnates finally merge with the heroes. Each touch by one of these incar-

nates reduces a hero's Constitution score by 4 points. When a hero's Constitution drops to zero, the hero makes a system shock check (based on the original Constitution score). If the check fails, the incarnate takes over (and the Constitution returns to normal). If the check succeeds, the hero's Constitution returns to normal, and the incarnate departs. These incarnates are described below. An incarnate never raises a character's ability score above 18 or reduces it below 3.

I AM INTENSITY INCARNATE!
I AM REAL!
YOU LESSER ONES
CAN'T HARM ME!
— THE LAST WORDS OF LATHURAZ THE MERCURIAL

Courage – Neutral Good; Constitution and Charisma increase by 2 points; host becomes fearless (but not stupid or reckless) and is now immune to magical fear; leaves if host changes to evil alignment.

Faith – Lawful Good; Strength increases by 4, Wisdom by 4, and Charisma by 2; host immune to magical alignment change.

Hope – Chaotic Good; Charisma increase by 2; +2 bonus to all saving throws; host immune to despair or hopelessness.

MINOR INCARNATES (3): AC 0; MV Fl 36 (A); HD 4; hp 27, 22, 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg Constitution loss, 4 points; SD +1 weapon or better to hit, immune to heat, cold, and electrical attacks; SW can be dislodged by *dispel good, limited wish, abjure, exaction, unholy word,* or *wish* spells; SZ T (1' diameter); ML champion (16); Int exceptional (15); AL see above; XP 1300 each.

5. LATHURAZ'S SANCTUARY

Lathuraz's sanctuary rests beside the Lake of Pure Thought. It appears as a great stand of trees intertwined into a living castle. Both Lathuraz and Zarulaz have hidden their skin and bones in this location. When the heroes reach this spot, read the following:

A stand of trees rises from the clearing beside the lake. The trunks form a circle not unlike the walls of a tower, and the branches intertwine to create a ceiling. These trees are huge, with glowing strands of gold running through the bark, and shimmering stars of silver speckling the leaves.

Lathuraz needs to return to this place to merge with his own body and begin the process of renewal that will return his true powers. The moment he merges with his skin and bones, Lathuraz gains all of the powers of a mercurial (see the MC sheet). However, for those powers to last when he once again sheds his flesh, he needs to rest within his skin for a full 24 hours.

If the heroes arrive at this location first, they can attack Lathuraz before he merges. If the evil mercurial arrives first, the heroes must face a Lathuraz who commands his full range of powers. Also, once he takes on his own flesh, Lathuraz destroys his brother's skin and bones. If Zarulaz is with the heroes when this happens (wherever they are), they witness the death of a mercurial. Zarulaz writhes and loses shape, screaming in absolute pain, until his inner flesh and organs turn to a thick red paste and melt into a formless puddle.

Use the map of the sanctuary if the heroes reach this spot first. They can attempt to locate Lathuraz's hidden skin and bones before the evil mercurial arrives, but the moment they step into the maze of branches, Lathuraz becomes aware of their presence. He uses all the power he possesses to transport himself to the sanctuary. In his weakened state, however, he doesn't appear quite where he had hoped to. Roll 1d4 to determine where Lathuraz appears. (See the map of Beldaari on the map sheet.)

THE REAL CHANT: In Cuth Banthor's form, Lathuraz can only be injured by the *sword of Lathuraz*. Even so, the mercurial can't be killed unless his flesh and bones are destroyed. His skin and bones, whether he's inside them or not, can be damaged by any magical weapon. (Note that *sword of Lathuraz* still receives all of its bonuses against the complete mercurial.) When the skin and bones are killed (82 hit points), his inner flesh and organs spill out, dissolving into a thick puddle.

✦ AWARDS ✦

If the heroes figure out the key to the Fourth Door on their own, give them 1,000 XP each.

If the heroes defeat the fanatics without killing them, give them 1,500 XP each.

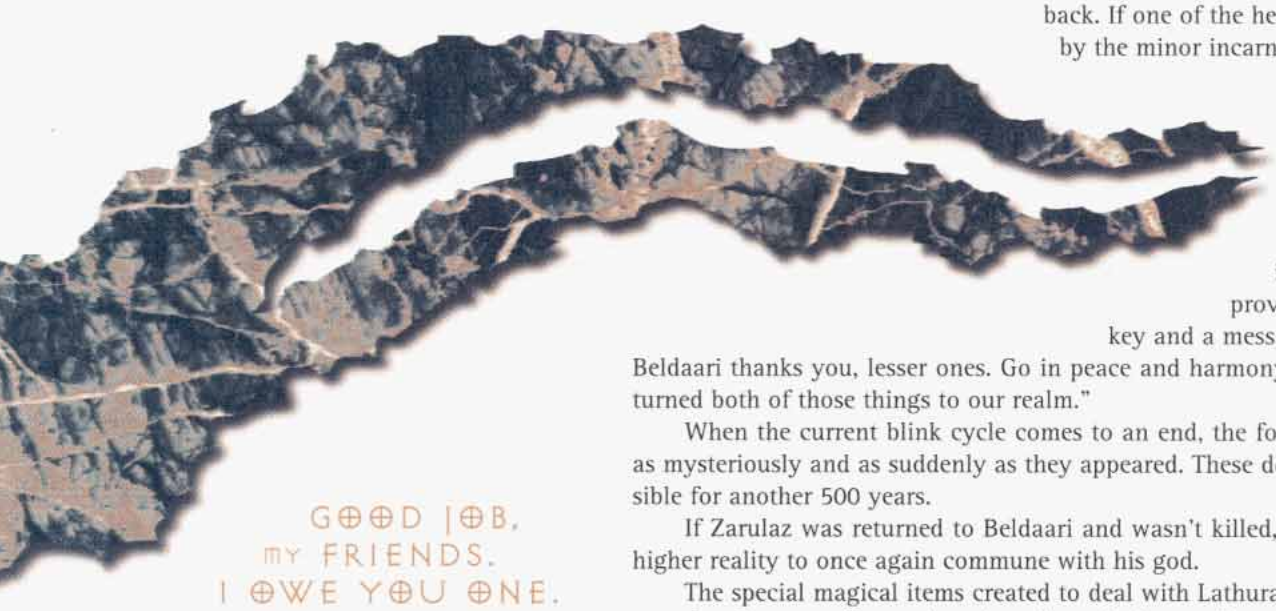
If the heroes manage to keep Zarulaz alive, award them an extra 1,000 XP each.

This series of adventures comes to an end when either the heroes destroy Lathuraz or the evil mercurial destroys the heroes. Details for concluding if the heroes are victorious are provided first.

IF THE HEROES WIN THE BATTLE, they receive Estavan's gratitude. They shouldn't expect to take advantage of the merchant lord, but they should realize that he owes them a favor.

AFTERMATH

When Lathuraz is destroyed, the heroes must return to the huge tree with the giant knot. Using the same key that got them through the door, they must activate the portal and return to Sigil. Should the heroes not have the key (as in the case where they followed Lathuraz through the door), then the DM must provide them with an alternative method for getting back. If one of the heroes was possessed by the minor incarnate *faith*, that hero has received the key as a collection of memories. Otherwise, a friendly mercurial wanders by and provides them with the key and a message: "The power of Beldaari thanks you, lesser ones. Go in peace and harmony, for you have returned both of those things to our realm."



GOOD JOB, MY FRIENDS. I OWE YOU ONE.

— ESTAVAN, TO THE HEROES AFTER THE ADVENTURE ENDS

When the current blink cycle comes to an end, the four doors disappear as mysteriously and as suddenly as they appeared. These doors are not accessible for another 500 years.

If Zarulaz was returned to Beldaari and wasn't killed, he remains in the higher reality to once again commune with his god.

The special magical items created to deal with Lathuraz have no purpose now, but Estavan offers to buy them from the heroes for a total of 8,000 gp — just in case.

The Society of the Locked Door waits for Cuth Banthor to return. When the blink cycle ends and the doors disappear, the fanatics break up and go their separate ways — for now.

The Will of the One continues to promote its plan to bring Aoskar back to life, and if the heroes returned Garmundi and/or the holy symbol of Aoskar to them, the sect is a few steps closer to its goal.

Balthazar Thames recovers from his injuries and eventually seeks out the heroes. He wants to know the details of the whole plot, and he just might have a job or two for the heroes — if they're interested.

IF THE EVIL MERCURIAL WINS THE BATTLE, the multiverse is in trouble. Lathuraz destroys Zarulaz's skin and bones. He spends enough time in Beldaari to regain his full powers, returning to Sigil just before the blink cycle ends. This time, he brings his skin and bones with him. Even though he knows that none of the mercurials would ever think of destroying them, he wants to be able to recharge his powers more often than once every 500 years. (Even with the skin and bones, however, Lathuraz's powers can never be completely recharged in the lesser reality of Sigil.)

In Sigil, Lathuraz turns the Society of the Locked Door into a true army and leaves the Cage before the Lady of Pain notices his presence. With an army of followers and more power, Lathuraz begins a campaign of conquest somewhere in the multiverse. Estavan eventually gathers a new group of heroes and sends them to battle the mercurial. The war goes on. . . .

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Hyper-reality
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary (family)
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Supra-Genius (19–20)
TREASURE:	None
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1 [1d6]
ARMOR CLASS:	–2 [0]
MOVEMENT:	15 [30]
HIT DICE:	14
THAC0:	7
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8+1/1d8+1 [2d8+2/2d8+2]
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Borrow form, mental blast [wish]
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil [+1 magical weapon or better to hit, regeneration]
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	20%
SIZE:	M (5′–6′ tall)
MORALE:	Steady (11–12)
XP VALUE:	9,000 [26,000]

[Items in brackets reflect hyper-reality. The XP award becomes 22,000 in hyper-reality if the mercurial is wearing the *manacles of lesser reality*.]

Some bloods know that the reality every berk is used to isn't the only reality. There're realities that have less substance, and there're realities that're more intense, *more real*, than the multiverse most bodies are familiar with. These different levels of reality have their own rules, characteristics, and inhabitants, though these rarely have any affect on the multiverse at large.

One of these higher realities (called *hyper-realities* by bloods who know the music) occupies a corner of Mount Celestia, where the realm of Beldaari shines with an intensity that's blinding to the lesser beings of the multiverse. In this realm, an unnamed power of pure thought contemplates ideas and concepts that are unfathomable to even the greatest sages of normal reality. This power is served by mercurials, an intelligent race of humanlike beings attuned to the rules of hyper-reality.

In his natural form, a mercurial is indistinguishable from a normal human. He's of normal human height and build, has flesh tones in the normal range, and even his hair color falls within hues that are natural on a hundred different Prime worlds. In fact, the only difference that marks a mercurial from a human is his eyes, which are orbs of liquid metal, either fiery gold, scintillating silver, or shifting bronze.

Where a mercurial truly differs from a human is in his ability to shed his skin and bones; his inner flesh and organs can exist apart from the rest of his body. In Beldaari, the mercurial steps out of his skin to physically and symbolically leave behind his corporeal anchor and commune with his god. It's their physiological attempt at leaving behind the things of the flesh to get closer to pure, unencumbered thought.

Mercurials can vocalize any language (their mental abilities allowing them to learn a new language by plucking it right out of someone's mind), but they prefer to simply project and receive thoughts.

COMBAT: Most mercurials are pacifists, refusing to fight even to defend themselves. If threatened, a mercurial can *wish* himself to safety and avoid the fight. When forced into battle, a mercurial can strike with both fists in a single round, delivering damage with each one. If a mercurial has shed his skin and bones, each his inner flesh and outer flesh have the creature's total hit points. While the inner flesh can be damaged, it continues to regenerate (see below) until the outer flesh and bones are destroyed (which completely kills the mercurial).

Borrow Form – Not only can a mercurial shed his skin and bones, he can then merge his inner flesh and organs with another being. Most mercurials "borrow" another's form to experience life through that being's senses. They never borrow a form without permission, and they never stay long enough to cause serious harm. A host gets a saving throw vs. petrification to resist the merge. If the merge is successful, the host loses 1d4 points of Constitution per turn and must make a saving throw vs. petrification when the mercurial sheds the host's form. A successful saving throw indicates that the host will recover the lost Constitution points at a rate of one point per day. A failure indicates that the reduction in Constitution is permanent (unless restored through magical means). Any host reduced to zero Constitution points dies.

Mental Blast – If necessary, a mercurial can project a powerful blast of pure thought at an enemy. This mental blast inflicts 1d12+2 points of damage on a target (who can save vs. rod for half damage).

Wish – In hyper-reality, a mercurial's every thought can become real. This is reflected in their ability to mentally "cast" a *wish* spell once per turn.

Immunity to Normal Weapons – In hyper-reality, a mercurial can be damaged only by weapons with a +1 enchantment or better. Normal weapons inflict no damage.

Regeneration – A mercurial's inner flesh and organs regenerate damage at a rate of 3 hit points per round. If merged with his skin and bones, the entire mercurial heals in this manner. If the skin and bones (or the merged mercurial) are reduced to 0 hit points, the mercurial dies.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Mercurials live in the fourth level of reality, a state of existence called hyper-reality. In hyper-reality, everything has more vitality: Colors are brighter, scents are stronger, sounds are more intense, and emotions are more

stirring. To reflect this, all damage rolls and movement rates are doubled; range, duration, effect, and area of effect of all spells are doubled; and experience points are calculated at double the normal rate.

Beldaari, the realm of the mercurials, is a huge forest specifically designed by its power to be a refuge of peace and quiet where all its inhabitants can contemplate and reflect on pure thoughts. The mercurials contemplate separately, but come together in family units whenever they return to their skin and bones. In Beldaari, mercurials are usually encountered while they are contemplating some great thought or another, resting beside a river or beneath the shade of a tree.



Ecology: While mercurials can eat most vegetables and meats, they usually draw nourishment by shedding their bodies and communing with the mental force of their god.

Lathuraz the Mad (LE): One mercurial is considered insane by the rest of his brethren. Lathuraz wasn't content to be a follower, so he discovered a portal that led to a lower reality and decided to become a god. To Lathuraz, the beings of lesser reality are dull, faded images – less than shadows of the reality to which he was born. In the lesser reality, Lathuraz must merge with lesser beings for nourishment. He consumes their internal organs to maintain his own existence. Even so, without the replenishing touch of hyper-reality, Lathuraz slides closer to the shadows he believes are inferior.

When in a borrowed form, Lathuraz takes complete control of that form. He has access to the form's memories and natural and learned abilities. Damage inflicted on the host is suffered by the host – Lathuraz only suffers damage if the host's body is reduced below 0 hit points. He can keep a host's form if the host dies from Constitution loss, but not if it is killed by hit point loss.

Normal weapons inflict no damage on Lathuraz in lesser reality, and even enchanted weapons inflict only temporary damage. There are some items that have been developed to specifically harm mercurials, though. These items are the *sword of Lathuraz, the rod of mercury, the manacles of lesser reality*, and *the cloak of trapping*. The sword inflicts damage that a mercurial can't regenerate. The rod locates mercurials. The cloak binds a mercurial, and the manacles inhibit a mercurial's powers. Even so, unless Lathuraz's skin and bones are destroyed, the mad mercurial can't be completely defeated.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

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FOR 4 TO 6 PLAYERS OF 2ND TO 10TH LEVELS

DOORS TO THE UNKNOWN

by Bill Slavicsek

FOUR DOORS OF MYSTERY APPEAR IN THE CAGE. THEY LEAD TO FOUR ADVENTURES, IF A BASHER HAS THE DARK OF THEM.

"These aren't doors in the traditional sense, cutter, but they're portals just the same. They appear for a short time every 500 years, popping up in different parts of Sigil. Each hides a mystery that's waiting to be solved, and together they just might hold the key to a secret of the multiverse. All a body's got to do is tumble to the right keys, open the doors, and face down the Unknown."

— Estavan, merchant lord

Doors to the Unknown is a collection of four PLANESCAPE® adventures that can be played separately or as a mini-campaign. When four doors appear in the Cage, the barmies crawl out of the shadows, and the heroes get drawn into events that could have consequences for the entire multiverse. Each door leads to a different plane and a different deadly challenge for the player characters. Together they offer a way to stop an ancient menace before it strikes again.

The PLANESCAPE *Campaign Setting* boxed set is required to run these adventures. The PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® *Appendix (I and II)* and *Uncaged: Faces of Sigil* are recommended to enhance play.

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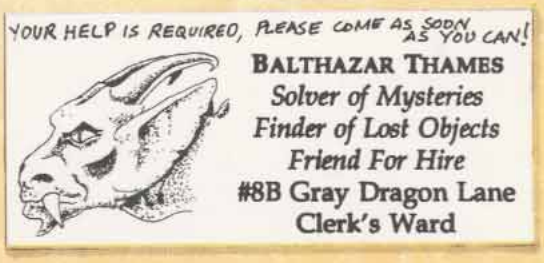
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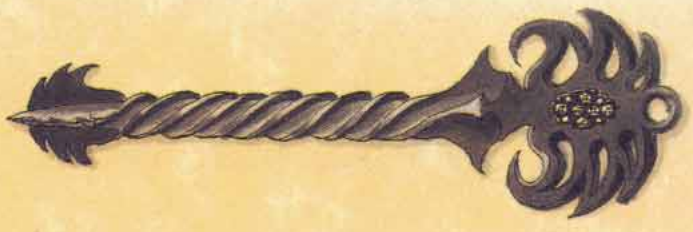
ISBN 0-7869-0447-X
51295>
9 780786 904471

Sug. Retail
U.S. $12.95 CAN $16.95 U.K. £7.99

THE FORGOTTEN VAULT







THULDANIN JUNKYARD

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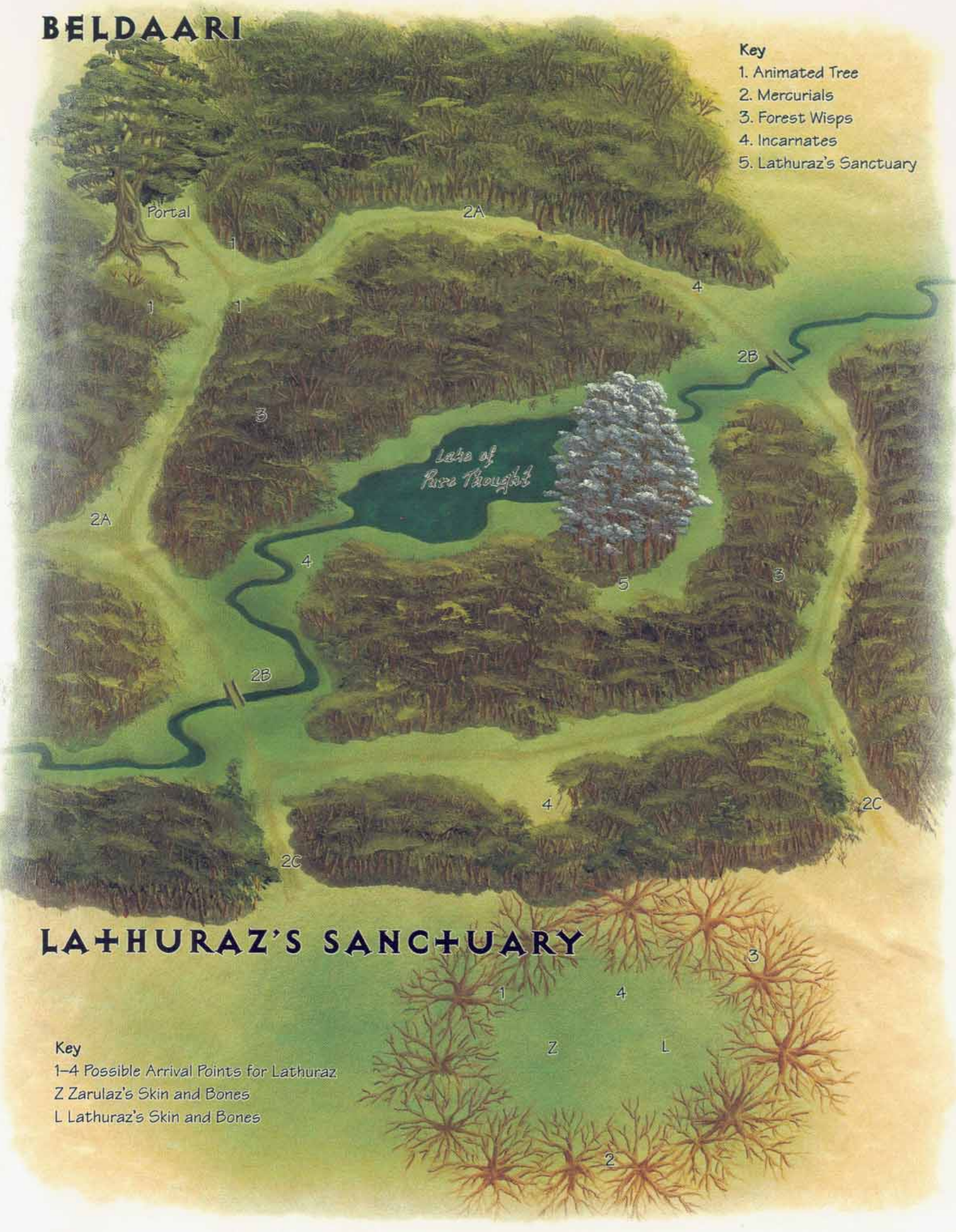


Key

1. Module of the Beast's Sanctuary
2. Module of the Omenotron
3. Module of Earth and Water
4. Sealed Module

X Cortelestial
U Logicus Unit
B Mountain Beast
G Green Slaad

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BELDAARI
Key
1. Animated Tree
2. Mercurials
3. Forest Wisps
4. Incarnates
5. Lathuraz's Sanctuary
Portal
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4
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Lake of Pure Thought
5
2C
LATHURAZ'S SANCTUARY
Key
1–4 Possible Arrival Points for Lathuraz
Z Zarulaz's Skin and Bones
L Lathuraz's Skin and Bones
Z
L
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